

2021

Perceptions of Domestic Violence Among Women in the Department of Artibonite, Haiti

Kenaz Jean Baptiste
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Kenaz Jean Baptiste

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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Perceptions of Domestic Violence Among Women in the Department of Artibonite, Haiti

by

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MA, Nova University, 2014

BA, Law School and Economic Sciences, Gonaives, Haiti, 1990

Dissertation Submitted in Partial
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

February 2021

Abstract

One of the major problems that face women in Haiti, especially those in the department of Artibonite, is domestic violence also called domestic or relationship abuse, and intimate partner violence. In the department of Artibonite (Artibonite county), violation of women's rights is stimulated and encouraged by cultural norms, religious practices, economic, social, and political conditions. This phenomenological study explored the experiences, views, and beliefs of abused women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, and the factors that influence domestic violence. Data were acquired through in-depth interviews of 17 women and was coded, categorized, and summarized into interpretive themes. Elements such as age, number of children, education level, marital status, and employment/income foster insecurity in the lives of women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti. Additionally, stigma and shame force these women to comply with the abuses, and to accept their humiliation and isolation for the sake of conforming to social standards. This study also showed the transmission of the violence from one generation to another as demonstrated by the social learning theory and the power imbalance proved by the feminist theory. Implications for positive social change include using this analysis as an opportunity for policymakers to develop effective policies and efficient programs focusing on gender equality and addressing the fight against gender-based violence.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to all the abused women of the world, especially those in Haiti under the harsh influence of men, cultural norms, religion, economic, social, and political conditions. Hopefully one day these women will break the fear and shame that inhabit them and denounce the abuses that should be condemned in accordance with international conventions and the Haitian laws.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I thank God for making this possible for me. Being the first person in my family with a doctorate degree is a special blessing, and I am so humbled and deeply indebted to the Lord.

I am so grateful to my chair Dr. Glenn Lee Starks and my second committee member Dr. Mark A. Stallo who offered me support and assistance for my writing. Dr. Starks is the best mentor I have ever had in my life.

I wish to thank my husband Fritzson Orius, my awesome son Eudes Moise Saint Pierre and my four beautiful daughters: Fournaz Saint Pierre, Sephora Saint Pierre, Keicha Saint Pierre and Keeona Orius for their encouragement. My kids were my leitmotiv to obtain this doctorate.

I owe a special thanks to my friend and colleague Savius Renaud who guided me to this path and has always been encouraging me throughout the pursuit of my career.

At last, I appreciate the collaboration of all women and organizations that support this research. I dedicate this study to all of them.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Since the creation of the Haitian society, men have been regarded as the master of the family, the only one who can decide how to behave towards his wife, concubine, and children. The church adapts to the situation and teaches women that they must be subjected to their husbands at all times. Despite the adoption of numerous international conventions and decrees and laws governing violence against women, the application of these laws is nonexistent regarding acts perpetrated by a man on his partner. The situation becomes more controversial when it comes to a senior state official or a friend of a government member (Ayibo Post, 2019; Radio Television Caraibes, 2019). Therefore, society is complicit in these manifestations of violence, especially those in the department of Artibonite who are silent and comply with situations of abuse.

The focus of this study is on domestic violence, which has a serious impact on the future of young people in particular and on society in general. Several reports from human rights organizations and feminist organizations recognize violence against women as a cultural, religious, educational, economic, and political matter (Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, 2015). This qualitative study aims to contribute to the lack of literature on violence against women by exploring how women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti perceive and experience domestic violence.

Background of the Study

Around the world, domestic violence against women and children is capturing the attention of researchers. It is acknowledged as a societal and public health problem (WHO, 2007). It is not different for Haiti, especially in the department of Artibonite,

where women continue to be victims of such abuse, empowerment, and social status. Despite the fact that the intimate abuse between partners is most likely underreported, many Haitian women in the department of Artibonite experience various forms of aggression in intimate relationships. Serious injury, disability, a variety of health problems, and death can be the direct consequences of violence against women. The World Health Organization (WHO) described violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, or deprivation"(WHO, 2002, 5). Violence originates from many motivations, conscious or unconscious, resulting in a high social inequality between partners.

The societal context places men on top of their family hierarchy. Women and children become the "affair" of men, who are the only one who can decide on how to treat them. Research has indicated a correlation of some covariates on partner violence depending on the partner's history of drunkenness, the financial situation of the women, and the community level on the predominance of male physical punishment of children (Gage, 2005).

The cultural barriers and institutional obstacles force women to be unwilling to report abuses. Haitian women appear to be trapped in cycles of violence (Levers, 2016). For example, if a woman brings a lawsuit against her abuser, she is then considered an enemy by the abuser and may incur further abuse. Because of the pervasive nature of gender-based violence in Haiti, the investigation into family violence cases in the

department of Artibonite is limited. Domestic violence is a private matter according to societal beliefs. Women living in rural areas are more vulnerable than those in urban areas. Alcohol use of husbands, gambling and drug use, level of education of both partners, economic status of women, duration of the marriage, and presence of children aged 6 to 14 years old are factors that can intensify physical, sexual, and emotional violence against women (Ksuthan, Mwaba, & Menon, 2015; Kizilgol & Ipek, 2018).

History of violence has received some attention in the literature. Metz et al. (2019) observed that the effects and behaviors associated with violence are solidly established in early childhood. Abandonment, affective distress, and a dominant male figure are factors that induce a traumatic climate in childhood that is considered as a precursor of violence within future relationship (Metz et al., 2019).

Research has also indicated that delinquency in a young adult's life could lead an individual to harm someone. Dissatisfaction, rebelliousness, academic impairment, and problems with temperament were found to lead to violent behaviors. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was also associated with the incidence of intimate partner violence (Ghani, 2018).

The current study investigated factors affecting domestic violence and its report to the proper authorities in the department of Artibonite, Haiti. More specifically, this research considered variables and empowerment indicators that encourage the acceptance of intimate partner abuse in this impoverished community.

Problem Statement

Domestic violence, known as the primary form of violence against women, is a violation of women's rights. Throughout the world, across societies, women are considered to be weak and vulnerable to exploitation. They are victims of various forms of physical or sexual violence or both. Fifteen percent to 71% of women experience violence from an intimate partner (WHO, 2007). Domestic violence is a significant community health problem. As reported by the WHO, one from every three women is faced with physical or sexual abuse by her partner. For some countries, the rate is close to 38%, the same as the rate of women murdered by their husbands (UNSTATS, 2015).

In the department of Artibonite, Haiti, precedence for initiating and perpetuating violence and abuse are stimulated and encouraged by cultural norms, religious practices, economic, social, and political conditions (CGRS, 2015). It can also be the choice out of a range of options of a partner (usually male) viewed as a tolerated behavior (Kaur & Garg, 2008).

The trend of domestic violence in Haiti is prolific and reaches every echelon of society. For example, the United States Department of State reported the *Country Reports on Human Rights Practice for 2013* confirmed, in Haiti, 301 complaints of rape from January 2010 to June 2013 (UN, 2014). However, these reports do not capture the depth of the issue as not every victim in Haiti reports their case. Some victims are scared to reveal abuse while others are ashamed (it is also the case for abused men) to denounce the intimate partner violence. They may not be informed on the reporting process, or they may be in fear of retaliation from perpetrators and their families (UN, 2012). Stigma and

shame to victims, the absence of social services, and lack of legal services can also be the causes of the underreported cases of gender-based violence in Haiti (CGRS, 2015).

Domestic violence is still very much hidden and not well studied in Haiti. There is no information on the magnitude of domestic violence in Artibonite. It is not known if or how contributing factors can predict violence among women in Artibonite in their relationship with a male partner. As a consequence, authentic official statistics about the rate of domestic violence are not available for this department. This lack of valid and accurate information about intimate violence in this department impedes the opportunity to develop effective policies and efficient programs focusing on gender equality and directing to fight against gender-based violence. This study will involve exploring the numerous factors that contributed to domestic violence against women who are dominated and controlled by their partners on complaisance to the structural norms.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences, views, and beliefs of Haitian women who have experienced domestic violence and assess the factors that may influence their experiences of domestic violence. The viewpoints of the abused women within the department of Artibonite, Haiti will contribute to the body of knowledge necessary to inform the public about violence against Haitian women, which is a societal problem based on the Haitian culture. Describing these experiences will fill the gap in understanding the characteristics and the magnitude of the violence within the context of family. Richness in understanding of the phenomenon will facilitate appropriate decisions for the relief of these women and the imposition of appropriate

policies that may reduce such abuse. Qualitative interviews cover the lack of information on the problem and allow a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence violence against women in this area (McLeod, 2017). Seventeen women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, were interviewed for research purposes.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What is the meaning of domestic violence to the Haitian women in the department of Artibonite?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What factors inhibit or support a woman reporting domestic violence to the proper authorities?

Theoretical Framework

Taking into account this topic and the problem statement, I used two theoretical frameworks: Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and feminist theory. The first theory emphasizes the role and importance of observation, imitation, and modeling through attention, memory, and motivation (Culatta, 2019). The basis of social learning theory is that people observe and learn. By experiencing violence at a young age, individuals will take the observed violent behavior as their own behaviors, thus, falling into a cycle of violence. Lanier and Henri (1998) believed that the observation and inducement of socially repulsive behaviors come up from the observation and experience of negative role models. Using social learning theory will influence my ability to demonstrate how learned behavior could affect the comportment of a witness of abuse becoming a batterer.

The second theory indicates that men use violence as control tactics to dominate women in the objective to maintain and exhibit male dominance in a patriarchal society (Pease, 2000). Studies have demonstrated that controlling behaviors among men is largely associated with the use of violence (Heise, 1999; Johnson, 2001) as evidence of their power motive. According to the feminist theory, this societal-level power disparity within patriarchal societies creates characteristics that support a male-dominated social order and family structure (Antai, 2011). I will use this theory to explain the traditional societal norms of “wife beating” by a partner that deny the women’s rights in Artibonite, Haiti. Focusing on the role of learning by observation and the control and power in partner relationships will help me provide a different window of domestic violence by focusing on the sociocultural, historical, economic, and political implications of women in Haiti, especially in the department of Artibonite.

Nature and Limitations of the Study

The nature of this study was qualitative and centered on adult women in heterosexual relationships who were experiencing domestic violence within their family. This approach provided contextual and in-depth information on the research questions (UNWOMEN, 2012). It helped in the understanding of the community level norms and attitudes that constitute the foundation of violence against women, the discrimination and stigma, and the barriers faced by the survivors to ask for the respect of their fundamental rights.

A phenomenological design was applied to explore the perceptions of the adult women facing domestic violence within their family in the department of Artibonite,

Haiti. In a study where small number of participants experiencing a common phenomenon is involved, a phenomenological design using data from semistructured, in depth interviews is an appropriate method for lived experiences (Merriam, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). In this research, the phenomenon that was studied is the lived experiences of adult women who have experienced partnership violence within their family. Data from personal interviews of a small number of participants sharing the same phenomenon was analyzed to determine similarities and difference within the victims (Moustakas, 1994).

A potential barrier or limitation is the fact that not all victims are reporting the violence suffered from their partners because of stigma, community and family pressure, mistrust of services, or inaccessibility of services. One other main issue is that most of the survivors believe it is best to keep family problems private. They may fear talking to strangers about their abuse.

Definitions

For this study, terms including domestic violence need to be defined:

Domestic violence is defined as physical, emotional, verbal, neglect, deprivation, and sexual abuse perpetrated by a person in the objective to take control over another person within the family or in a relationship. It could be represented by threats, intimidation, isolation, physical force, financial control, and forced sexual behavior (University of Illinois at Chicago Campus Advocacy Network 2009).

Violence against women is described differently, depending on the context, when using other terms as intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, conjugal violence,

intimate violence, family violence, partner violence, women abuse, spousal violence, violence against women, violence against wives, abusive relationship, wife-beating, wife battering, violence against known women, woman and child abuse, coercive control, and forms of sexual abuse. All of these interchangeable terms concern violence against women performed by an intimate male partner. The *Elimination of Violence Against Women*, declared by the United Nations (UN) defines this phenomenon as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (UN General Assembly 1993: Article 1). The WHO defined violence against women as physical, psychological, or sexual harm, including beating, hitting, slapping, kicking, intimidation, belittling, humiliation, sexual coercion, controlling access to friends and family, monitoring movements, and restricting access to information or assistance (García-Moreno et al. 2002:13).

Assumptions

In conducting this study, I assumed that violence against Haitian women in Artibonite is dictated by patriarchal norms, rigid gender roles, and societal acceptance for male dominance. Second, I assumed that women are expected to endure violence for fear of stigma and societal reprisals. Third, I assumed giving an outlet for adult women in this area to talk about their experiences in a relationship of violence was necessary to obtain information on the real lives of these survivors. Fourth, I predicted that men's behaviors may change if local government and agencies understand the inequality of gender-based

violence and its impacts on the family, community, and the entire society. Last, a phenomenological design was more appropriate to describe the nature of the lived experiences of partnership violence of women in the department of Artibonite in Haiti. These assumptions preceded the interviewing of adult women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, who had been abused in the previous 5 years.

Scope and Delimitations

The sample in this research study will be abused women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti. The sample of victims met the following criteria: (a) the participants will be adult women (i.e. 18 years old and older), (b) married in heterosexual relationships or being a concubine in time of the abuse, (c) living in the department of Artibonite, (d) victims of partnership aggression, (e) include participants of all social status, (f) include participants of all educational level, (g) comprise on a broad range of ages, (h) include women of different religious backgrounds, and (i) not living with the abuser. The sample did not involve men and anyone that was not subjected to domestic violence.

The participating women were members of various organizations working in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, and were recruited by the use of flyers posted in diverse official women's organizations. The size of the sample was 17 women who reflect the research questions and recommendations mandated by Dukes (1984) and Moustakas (1994) for a phenomenological design. These participants were contacted through women's organizations working in the valley of Artibonite. The recruitment was done until saturation (Mason, 2010). The exclusivity of this sampling was the fact that women

were selected according to their similar characteristics: having been abused by a male partner. The entire population was represented by a small number of the units (17 women from one of the 10 departments of the country).

Upon initial contact, I addressed the questions and concerns about the subject and agreed upon the date and time of the telephone discussions. Issues relating to informed consent and protection of the respondent's confidentiality were explained at the beginning of the sessions. I started the process of informed consent with the recruitment of the participants.

Significance of the Study

As a paradoxical phenomenon, domestic violence has a social significance. Domestic violence is primarily committed by a known individual, not strangers. Violence and intimacy are two seemingly contradicting experiences that occur between men and women in their relationships and experiences. Through their confidence, housework, childcare, close physical proximity, silence, conversation, and sexual activity, violence can happen. Because each partner knows about the strengths and weaknesses of each other, the person, their past, their previous abuse, it may be easy to apply an excess of implicit or explicit power in heterosexual relations. This situation facilitates the eroticization of dominance (Heam, 2012). Domestic violence appears to be an interpersonal and intrapersonal social phenomenon. Despite the intimate relationship between partners, domestic violence is, often, happening in public spaces, including pubs, streets, workplaces, and clubs. When occurring in the home, it brings stress and desolation for the children. However, some studies confirm that domestic

violence can also be perpetrated by other family members outside of romantic relationships (Bedera, 2015).

Other reasons show how domestic violence is significant for sociology. There are politics surrounding the naming and framing of domestic violence (Klein and Kelly, 2013). Depending on the context, it can be named differently: domestic violence, conjugal violence, intimate violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, partner violence, women abuse, spousal violence, violence against women, violence against wives, abusive relationship, wife-beating, wife battering, violence against known women, woman and child abuse, coercive control, and forms of sexual abuse. This phenomenon requires the positioning, orientation, and framing of sociologists and jurists as they do for other types of violence (Heam, 2012). Such action is essential since, in Haiti, assume that a male partner has the authority to correct, as he wants, both women and children.

Summary and Transition

Domestic violence is a phenomenon that affects an extensive number of women in Artibonite, Haiti. It is a burden for the Haitian society, and it affects the development of the country. Culturally, women are considered as “property” of men who believe that they are maintaining good order in the family. Because of this, men impose fear and control in a relationship. Domestic violence has potent and tragic impacts on women’s health and on children who also become victims of such a relation. These and other elements of the social problem domestic violence among women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti are examined in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study is about the social problem of partnership violence perpetrated by male figures against women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, and the study respondents' perceptions of its occurrence. A qualitative research design was employed to examine the study questions: What is the meaning of domestic violence to the Haitian women in the department of Artibonite? What factors inhibit or support a woman reporting domestic violence to the proper authorities?

The phenomenon of domestic violence in Haiti is not well studied since it is a hidden problem. Rare are the women who speak up against this abuse. Furthermore, Haitian culture encourages the dominance of men over women. It impedes a correct social and legislative approach to combat this gender inequality within Haitian society, notably in the Artibonite department. To explain intimate violence two frameworks have been proposed: social learning theory and feminist theory. To illustrate the phenomenon of intimate partner violence, I present and evaluate those perspectives based on the available literature. In this chapter, the problem of intimate violence will be examined from a historical and current interpretation to include the different aspects of the problem, the responses of the legislative and judicial administrations, government corruption, and the understanding of the civilian population.

Literature Search Strategy

I confined my research in databases such as Google Scholar, Thoreau multi-database search, and press related to Haiti. Articles were reviewed to acquire current and relevant literature. The terms *domestic violence*, *intimate partner violence*, *battered*

women, violence against women in Haiti, factors in violence, male dominance, patriarchal, male power, male control, and cycle of violence were employed during the search. Various terms including *social learning, learned behavior, socialization, intergenerational, generational transmission, economic, resources, and feminism* were used in combination with the term *violence* to retrieve studies surrounding them. For particular situations concerning Haiti not included in indexed journals, searches using Google were used for identification. Many sources, primary and secondary, are included. Books, as a relevant secondary source, are referred to in the review wherever required.

Theoretical Foundation

Social Learning Theory

Psychologist Albert Bandura created social learning theory, also called “learned behavior theory,” which asserts that people learn from one another by observation, imitation, and modeling (Bandura, 1977). Through the Bobo Doll experiments, Bandura discovered the attitudes of the children who imitated the violent behavior of the watched adults and who used verbal and physical aggression with the doll. This process is called observational learning, which is also referred to as diverse reinforcement, modeling, and shaping (Praveen, 2017). One year later, Bandura (1978) affirmed, “a theory of human aggression should explain (a) how aggressive patterns are formed, (b) what provokes people to behave aggressively and (c) what sustains aggressive behavior” (p.19). The social learning theory considers human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, practice, and environmental influences. Attention is paid to the observation (retention), how the image is coded and organized (reproduction), and

reasons for imitating observations (motivation). According to Bandura, the world and a person's behavior cause each other because of the "reciprocal determinism" while an individual's environment causes their reaction because of the behaviorism (Bandura, 1986). Bandura posited that three components form the personality: the environment, behavior, and the ability to keep images in mind and language (Bandura, 1973). Because the social learning theory encompasses attention, memory, and motivation, many are those who considered this theory as a bridge between behaviorist and cognitive learning theories (David, 2019).

To understand aggression and psychological disorders, social learning theory has been employed recurrently (Bandura, 1973; Bandura, 1969). It has been generally used in training programs for the technique of behavior modeling and to examine the ways children becoming adults will repeat the violence observed in childhood. Social learning theory is of importance to understand the transmission of intergenerational aggression and its generalization to other relationships (Foshee et al., 2009). Recently, social learning theory has been used to evaluate the concept of self-efficacy in a variety of ideas (Bandura, 1997). Television commercials are an excellent example of how to attract the attention and the motivation of people by modeling the behavior presented in the ad (Culatta, 2019).

The assumption of vicarious learning aggression through observing is the base of the social learning theory. Bandura made the conception that children will behave negatively or positively depending on the exposure of modeling of behaviors that their parents have demonstrated. The ways the parents manage their problem will be the same

children will use, when becoming adults, to resolve theirs. The primary source of influence over children is role modeling (Cuevas & Bui, 2016). Children follow the patterns of violence observed within their families. Men are learned to perpetrate violence by seeing their fathers being aggressive toward their mothers. At the same time, women accept the fact of being battered because they have seen their mothers supporting the same situation (Ali & Naylor, 2013). This theory implies that family instills the approval and the acceptance of the use of violence in relationships (Gelles, 1972). According to McDonald et al. (2006), it is more likely for children observing the patterns of violence of their battered parents to reenact the same behaviors by abusing their future partners. Assisting violence is the initial learning of approval for the use of violence (Gelles, 1972). Children infer rules through observations of how close ones act and react. These adult children will train their children the same way they were trained (Barnett et al., 2005). Consequently, violence within the family is transmitted from one generation to the next. Such attitudes justify the intergenerational “cycle of violence” of that surrounding partnership violence (Bandura & Ribes-Inesta, 1976; Cuevas & Bui, 2016; Black et al., 2010). Even though social learning theory is one of the important theories used for the understanding of the intimate violence, it has been criticized by many opponents who question the definition of the terms and the situations of respondents on the studies. They are also believed that not all men experiencing violence in the past become aggressors (Delsol & Margolin, 2004).

Feminist Theory

Feminism is one of the predominant theoretical models for intimate partner violence that was initiated in the early 1970s. According to Walker (2006), this theory was initially known as “Women’s Liberation Movement,” a political movement aimed to advocate and ensure gender equality and to empower women. With a preference to use terms such as “wife battering,” “wife assault,” “wife battered” instead of “spouse abuse,” “family violence,” and “marital violence”, feminists initiated some changes in the legal and justice system, interventions and programs to make this phenomenon a criminal offense (McPhail et al., 2007). They advance that violence “wife battering” is not a private matter. It is “a deeply embedded social problem” that needs to be tackled by social change (Gondolf & Fischer, 1988). Feminists view this issue as a social phenomenon imposed by the patriarchal structure of nearly all societies that impose on women an unassertive state when using violence, including physical, psychological, economic, and sexual abuse as control methods. This attitude was also viewed as the product of gender power disparity in society (Bograd, 1988).

Feminist ideals and beliefs focus on what culture unfairly imposes on women compared to men around the world. Women are not treated equally to men. The feminist assumption is that women are always victims of men in heterosexual relations. Women use violence only in the case of self-defense (Barnett et al., 1997). Men, in traditional societies, are the commanders, while women must be subservient and docile. In the workplace, unequal salaries are still prevalent, despite the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (History, 2017). Data from the U.S. Census Bureau affirmed that, in 2017, women’s

median annual earnings were \$14,910 less than what was obtained men (U.S. Census, 2019). Feminists seek to make changes in societies and countries, institutions, and housing to maintain similar opportunities for men and women. Four characteristics envelop the feminist perspective: 1) Gender as the main focus; 2) Gender relations as a problem; 3) Gender relations are changing; and 4) Feminism is an emancipatory commitment to change (Lumen Learning, n.d.).

Patriarchy

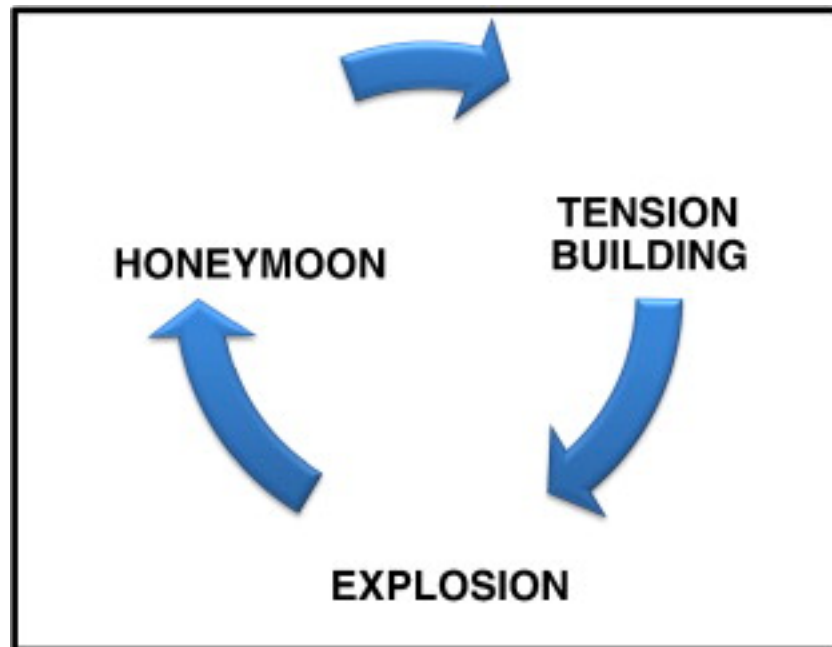
Patriarchy is a term used in the literature to describe men's dominance on women (Pease, 2000). According to Yllo and Strauss (1990), the concept is related to the conservation and adoption of the abuse of women. Patriarchy is the result of a belief system that gives grounds for male dominance within a society. Ali and Naylor (2013) believed that egalitarian patterns in both private and public domains are rejected. Men get control over everyone and everywhere. In the family, senior men control not only women but also younger men and boys, declared Haj-Yahia and Schiff (2007). As a result, men are placed as the head of the family in patriarchal societies. They are the only ones deciding for the whole family. Feminism perspective understood that the use of violence is an excellent way for men to manifest their dominance over women within the family. In societies adopting the patriarchal ideology, people are more lenient toward the phenomenon of wife-beating since people believe that violence against women is beneficial for the well-being of the family. They also think that it is reasonable to keep women accountable for the violence against them (Dodash & Dodash, 1979; WHO, 2005; Haj-Yahia & Schiff, 2007).

The Cycle of Violence

For a good understanding of the intimate violence, feminist theory has been used by many theorists including Walker (1979) who presented the cycle of violence, which is most of the time unsurprising, as a great way to apprehend why battered women cannot leave an abusive relationship. As shown in Figure 1, he came up with three phases for this cycle: tension building, abuse or explosion, and honeymoon or remorse forgiveness (Ali, 2013). In the first phase, the abuser is getting frustrated and starts blaming his partner. Later, he sets upon his partner, from seconds to days, by using physical, psychological, emotional, or sexual abuse. The abuser is now free of anger and he may begin apologizing to his victim. The abused person considers the apology as a way for the abuser to let her know that he will never become violent again. The couple is now enjoying its honeymoon period. For some situations, the intensity of the violence is lessened; for others, the cycle just stopped for a while and will continue with the same or a higher intensity. Consequently, the victim develops a feeling of helplessness and the development of fear. The abused woman considers herself as the cause of this violence.

Figure 1

The Cycle of Violence



Note. From Walker (1979). *The battered woman*. New York: Harper & Row.

Learned Helplessness

Theorist Martin Seligman corroborated the feminist perspective by explaining through his theory of learned helplessness described in the 1960s. From some experiments with dogs placing them in two types of cages, he declared that dogs put in the electric shock felt helplessness and did not try to escape their miserable condition (Overmier & Seligman, 1967; Seligman & Maier, 1967). This theory presented an appreciable perception on why women experiencing intimate violence cannot leave their abusers and why they are taking the blame over them (Ball & Wyman, 1978; Waites,

1978; Walker, 1977/1978; Walker, 1979). Garcia-Moreno et al. (2005) reported, from their study in WHO's multi-country study, that the abused women gave a justification for being battered when not accomplishing housework, defying a husband, cheating, or saying no to sex. Wahed and Bhuiya (2007) appropriated such attitudes as a support to the theory of learned helplessness of Seligman.

Battered Women Syndrome

Walker (1979) came back to explain the concept of battered women syndrome further when using the theories of the cycle of violence and learned helplessness. This mixture was used for women's retaliation behavior considered as a sub-type of the PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) (Walker, 2006). After experiencing two cycles of violence, a woman is qualified battered. This theory, known as battered women syndrome, has been successfully introduced in different professional situations, including policy, legal reform, family, clinical intervention, and custody problems (Craven, 2003). Also, this concept has been used in court cases for the defense of women killing their abusive husbands (Scholz, 2000; Dutton, 1996) since explaining the psychological state of these disturbed women (Scholz, 2000).

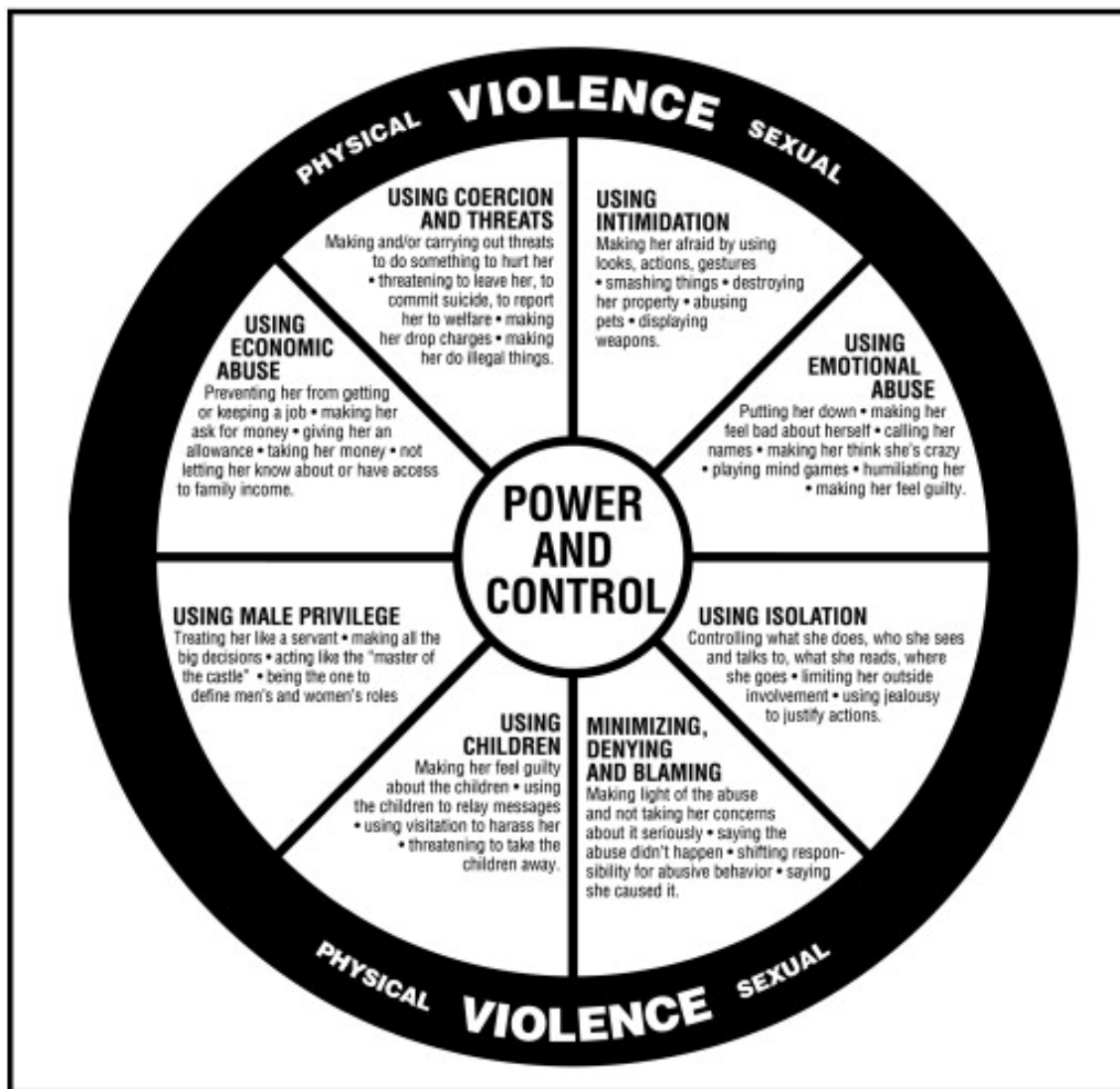
Power and Control

One other perspective derived from the feminist paradigm is "Power and Control." Researchers believe that men use violence as a means to control their partners (women). According to the feminist perspective, men use force to obtain and preserve their power over women (Dodash & Dodash, 1979). Same as the resource theory believing that the relative resources of a conjoint determine and influence the risk of

partner violence (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006), the feminist perspective understood the power imbalance as the main cause of violence against women in a relationship. The model known as “the power and control wheel” illustrates the ideology of the feminist perspective on intimate violence (see Fig. 2). It was developed in 1980-1981 by Duluth after research on the Domestic Intervention Project (DAIP). It provides an excellent comprehension of the tactics used by abusive men to lessen women while maintaining their power and control. “Power and control” is not an isolated matter, as affirmed by the model. It is a principal reason that invigorates males to keep the opposite gender under control. Men are the ones responsible for abuses, not abused women. That is the reason why feminists encourage the justice system to keep the abusers accountable for their offense (Ali & Naylor, 2013).

Figure 2

The Power and Control Wheel: Duluth Model



Note. Domestic Abuse Intervention Project.

<http://www.theduluthmodel.org/pdf/PowerandControl.pdf>.

Partnership Violence Estimation

Partnership violence has been recognized internationally as a violent environment with a severe health problem, including physical and psychological complications for women and children. It is the most common form of violence that women experience. Regardless of location, income, educational level, or social status, this phenomenon affects women of all ages. Research indicates a percentage of 20% to 50% of women experiencing spousal abuse in their lifetime (Heise, Raikes, Watts, & Zwi, 1994). The WHO (2017) affirms a percentage of 1 in 3 (35%) of women victims of violence, either physical or sexual, by a male partner in their lifetime and a rate of 38% murders of women perpetrated by an intimate partner (WHO, 2017; ICRW, 2019). According to the 2018 report of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, 87,000 women were intentionally killed worldwide in 2017, and 50,000 of them were victims of partnership violence (UNODC, 2018).

Across the globe, violence is one of the most common forms of insecurity facing women. It can be presented in many ways: physical, emotional and economic abuse, early and forced marriage, forced and unwanted sex, female genital cutting, trafficking, and deprivation of resources and rights occurring in public or private life (ICRW, 2019). In all spheres of life including home, street, work, school, government institutions, women of any class, age, education, and religion experience partnership violence (OHCHR, n.d)

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), domestic violence is “a consequence of gender inequality reinforced by discriminatory laws and

exclusionary social norms that undermine women and girl's opportunities for education, income, and independence" (UNDP, 2018). It is, as reported by UN Women (2019), "a grave violation of human rights" that has negative impacts on women and their families, their community and country; a "form of discrimination and a human rights violation" (UN Women, 2019; OHCHR, n.d.). The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women identifies gender-based violence as discrimination's structure that impedes women's lives. Women are deprived of their liberty, security of person, and equal protection under the law. They are subject to torture, and to degrading treatment that negatively affects women's well-being (OHCHR, n.d.; UN Women, 2019). Victims of conjugal violence can suffer from injuries, depression, alcohol use problems, sexual and reproductive health risks, and impaired social functioning (Ellsberg et al., 2008; WHO, 2012; WHO, 2013a).

In a comparative analysis of data from more than 180,000 women of 12 Latin American and Caribbean countries (Haiti included), Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO in collaboration with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention affirmed that between 17% and 53% of women interviewed revealed having experienced physical or sexual abuse by their partners. From the population-based data for these countries, a percentage of 41% to 82% women reported cuts, burn, bruises from broken bones, and miscarriages while between 28% and 64% of abused women did not report the violence (WHO, 2013).

The situation in Artibonite, Haiti, is similar to that reported for the entire region. Overall, 28% of women, since the age of 15, have experienced physical violence. A

percentage of 29% of women had experienced physical, emotional, and sexual abuse from a husband or partner. Among women aged 15 to 19 (43%), partnership violence is highest while it is 35% among divorced, separated, or widowed women (MSPP et al., 2013). Per the 2012 EMMUS survey, the Ministère de la Santé Publique et de la Population et al. (2013) affirmed that 28% women (15-49) had experienced physical violence since they were 15; 13% of women from the same age range report they had been sexually abused. From May 2013 to May 2014, the National Human Rights Defense Network reported 581 murders, 24 kidnappings, and 148 rapes (RNDDH, 2014).

Artibonite Demographics

Artibonite is one of ten departments of Haiti. It is important to note that Haiti is ranked 168 out of 189 countries in the 2017 Human Development Index (UNDP, 2018). Almost half of the population lives in extreme poverty. The unemployment rate is also very high, reaching 49% in metropolitan areas, 37% in semi-urban areas, and 36% in rural areas (WHO/PAHO, 2010). The majority of Haitians are issued from black African slaves with an amalgam of racial tradition and an unforgettable history (WPR, 2019). Artibonite is located in north-central Haiti, and it is the largest department and the second most populous of the country, with an area of 1,924 square miles, and a population of 1,727,524 divided in five (5) arrondissements (counties) reported New Haiti Road Network (2015). Artibonite is one of the essential regions of Haiti since it carries the weight of the most appreciated element of the country's diet: rice. Even though the ecosystem services on this valley are negatively impacted by deforestation, with its 28,000 irrigated hectares, the region of Artibonite is the largest rice-growing area in

Haiti. The valley produces close to 80 percent of the country's rice (IDB, 2009; Oxfam, 2019). With poor technical knowledge and a lack of materials to work, the majority of families from this department depend on agriculture (IDB, 2009). The two main cities of the Artibonite's department are Gonaives (the capital) and Saint-Marc.

Historical Interpretation of Intimate Violence in Haitian Culture

Haiti was "discovered" in 1492 by Christopher Columbus, who occupied the territory for Spain. It was at this time the island of Hispanola, which, by the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick, was divided into two regions: Saint Domingue controlled by the French and Santo Domingo controlled by the Spaniards (Shah, 2004). The Taïnos, a native people, inhabited the land. They were suppressed by Spanish imperialism that was promptly replaced by a traumatic French colonial command (Cromwell & Edwards, 2004).

African slaves were shipped to the land to be exploited by working the sugar plantations under subsequent French rulers reported Cromwell & Edward (2004). Over 500,000 people, mainly from western Africa, were tyrannized for more than 100 years at the highest point of slavery. With its natural resources, including coffee, rum, sugar, and cotton, and the submission of the French macabre commandment, Saint Domingue became a valuable territory to France. This situation led to the Haitian Revolution of 1791-1803 against the colonists and the Napoleon army. Boukman, a slave rebellion, under the commandment of Toussaint Louverture fought, from many battles, the French army and attributed to the country its independence. Haiti (mountainous country) became, then, the first free Black republic in the world (Jack & Ali, 2010).

The context of European imperialism is the beginning of the history of Haitian women. The majority of French colonialists came alone to the island, leaving in France their wives and children, who would be soon immigrated to Saint Domingue (Pierce & Elisme, 2000). Caribbean-born women of mixed European and African parentage were placed in charge of households (Pierce & Elisme, 2000). According to Pierce and Elisme (2000), in the course of the colonial period, women of color "were thought to have particular sexual power over white men since the whites lived openly with these women and acknowledged paternity of their children." By the end of the 18th century, the sons and daughters of the free women of color created a new generation of wealthy free families of color. The women did not have the command anymore after the second and third generations of mixed ancestry. They were replaced by their sons who, with their entente with the population, defeated the French colonial rule (Pierce & Elisme, 2000). In the meantime, women, including their mothers, were relegated second-class citizens and dumped, as stated Pierce & Elisme (2000), to the "bottom of the economic and social ladder."

Haitian women played a crucial role in the eradication of slavery in the Western Hemisphere, particularly in Haiti (Dubois, 2003). For example, Ezili Danto was a spiritual presence and power for Toussaint, Petion, and Dessalines, the precursors of the independence, who victoriously fought against the French colonists. Gran Adbaraya Toya, known as Toya, was a warrior. She taught Dessalines how to fight in hand-to-hand combat, to shoot, and to throw a knife. Marie Sainte Dédé Bazile, known as Défilée, took the chopped pieces of the emperor Dessalines that were left at the Pont Rouge bridge and

buried them. Marie Claire Heureuse, Dessalines' wife, was a kind woman who was taking care of the sick soldiers, and the prisoners of the Revolutionary War. She acted like the Red Cross for victims on both sides of the battle. Sergeant Suzanne Bélair, known as Sanit Belè, was a Haitian woman who was executed by French soldiers and refused to be executed differently than her husband. To her, it was an insult to a woman's valor to wear a blindfold during an execution. Marie-Jeanne Lamartinière was a Haitian woman who stood on a bloody day at her officer husband's side to fight in traditional men garments the French Army at the Crête-à-Pierrot battle (Outpost, 2018; Girard, 2009). In addition to these known examples, many unrecognized Haitian women played a role in the War of Independence. Some of them fought off some white managers or were alongside Dessalines during the siege of Crete à Pierrot; others were counted as direct victims because of their active participation to the revolution. Many were captured among the fighters and some of them preferred to kill themselves by jumping from an escarpment (Girard 2009). The previously mentioned women, as well as those not mentioned here, did what some men may have been hesitant to do. They played a direct role in the Revolution and represent the Haitian's legacy of courage (Outpost, 2018).

Despite their courage and their participation in the Haitian Revolution, women face discrimination in all levels of society and at any place including at home, government, work, and courts. It is a strong patriarchal structure emanated from the slave era. Rural traditions supported this structure and, unfortunately, conservative Christianity did reinforce it by their "resignation message" explaining to women that they

should be submissive to husbands; that they have no authority over men and must be silent. The belief was that a woman's role was a child-bearer and home-keeper (Crabtree, 2019). The laws by its silence and its weakness foster the abuse. Consequently, men in the economic, labor, justice, health, education, and decision-making sectors have an advantaged and unequal consideration over Haitian women (IACHR, 2009).

Current Interpretation of Intimate Violence in Haitian Culture

Women's attempts to reduce the violence in Haitian culture and to valorizing their role within the society was obstructed by the patriarchal belief that imposes to Haitian women the domestic chores and child-care as their only concern (Pierce & Elisme, 2000). Because the Haitian culture is predominately male-dominated, women are responsible for cooking, cleaning, child rearing, and going to the market (for buying or selling goods). Men are working the family farm. "Women are not equal to men"; this is the Haitian belief. Consequently, men can be leaders in the community, and the submissive ones are women (GAC, 2018). Thirty thousand Haitian women marched in the streets of Port-au-Prince two months after the fall of the dictator Duvalier in 1986 to jog the new leader's memory on women's rights (Women War Peace, n.d.). Many activist Haitian women created new organizations focusing on women's rights, defense, education, and economic empowerment and are continually working for the equality of women (Jack & Ali, 2010). These efforts did not have any effects on the abusive situation, nor the progression of women's rights around the world. Haitian women continued to experience in their daily-lived violence in their homes (Wiley, 2003; Pierce & Elisme, 2000). The same treatment of inequality is attributed to Haitian women who are unrepresented in Haitian politic life

and public institutions. There is a “low representation on women in political life, including the 2015 elections”, reported CEDAW (2015) in the section labeled article 7. In the 2010 elections, only five women represented the population in the parliament: one female senator and four female deputies. There were not any female senators and only four percent of women in the chamber of Deputies were elected from the last elections happening in 2016. The Haitian society had never elected a woman as president. However, a female president, Ertha Pascal Trouillot, was temporarily appointed in 1990-1991 and did an appreciable job for the community (CEDAW, 2015; Haiti Libre, 2015). The U.N. Human Rights Committee observed that few women are appointed to positions of responsibility, notably in the police and the justice system (U.N. HRC, 2014), though jobs as drivers, construction, police are mostly executed by men. According to society, women can only be teachers, housekeepers, nurses, and secretaries (GAC, 2018). Additionally, a pervasive problem of workplace sexual harassment exists within the Haitian culture. Most Haitian women need to have a “parenn” (An influent government or community person who can recommend the postulant) to be accepted in the administration (public or private) despite their qualifications. To be in a position of power, Haitian women need to be strong and resistant to intimidation. The CEDAW report recognized in the Haitian society sexual harassment and other derogatory actions in the workplace, and the problems of rural women (article 11 & 14). Women’s rights group Solidarite Fanm Ayitien (SOFA) found from a 2015 study that 75 percent of workers have been sexually and morally harassed (e.g., discrimination, pressure, and

blackmail). More than 63 percent of women were forced to have sexual relations with their employers or their immediate manager to be able to secure their job (SOFA, 2015).

Married and unmarried heterosexual women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti are likely to be victimized by their partner. Such violence imposes a situation of vulnerability and substantial fear within the family. The Haitian culture consistently presents notable episodes of widespread violence. As stated earlier, this is a heritage of colonization, stereotypes based on social norms establishing the women's roles, treatments, poverty, power and control, economic dependence on men, and lack of education. Abuse against women tends to include rape, sexual assault, verbal abuse (cursing, humiliating remark, name-calling), physical abuse, psychological abuse, and economic manipulation. Physical harm against women, the most popular, can be inflicted as slapping, pushing, punching, pitting, kicking, pulling hair, hitting with blunt objects, choking, stabbing, shopping with a knife or machete, and shooting with a gun inside a private setting or in a public area. Domestic violence in this area seems to be underestimated (World Health Organization, 2005). Rates of intimate violence in this area are not available and without studies being made on Haitian women about their experiences of domestic violence, the rate of the victims in Haiti appears lower although violence against women in the department of Artibonite is known as a profound problem (WHO, 2013). Additionally, PAHO (2014) published a three DHS survey (the Dominican Republic 2007, Haiti 2005/6, and Peru 2007/8), where it was demonstrated that nine out of ten women from Haiti reported experiencing partner physical violence in the past 12 months. In his study, Kang (2011) identified the climate of insecurity as a

potential factor that permitted violence against women who would not conventionally be targeted as victims. This is an unconventional portrait since, contrarily these circumstances of violence usually affect the poor, and the uneducated. All women were included, regardless of their demographic. This situation then produces a climate of insecurity for all Haitian women living on Artibonite and generates fear and uncertainty of survival for this vulnerable category of humans (Kang, 2011).

Different Aspects of the Problem

Haitian women, and particularly those living on Artibonite, confront diverse barriers that impact their access to enjoy their civic and political rights. Both males and females can be victims of intimate violence. However, studies revealed a disproportionate prevalence among women (WHO, 2012). Around the world, marital violence continues to be the most endemic form of violence against women. Depending on the report, the risk of being a victim of domestic violence varies. Marital discourse, history of emotional abuse, history of intimate partner violence, substance abuse, prior forced sex, stress, depression, and traditional ideologies were identified as risk factors by Dixon and Graham-Kevan (2011) when performing their literature review on intimate partner violence. Women in Artibonite, Haiti, are continually facing intimate abuses because of the following factors: gender, household income, legislative and judicial responses, government attitudes and corruption, fear of reprisals and social stigma.

Intimate Violence and Gender

Many are the researchers focusing on women as victims of partner violence. According to Lawson (2012), terms such as wife-beating and wife battering were the first

conditions showing the issue of gender perspectives. Despite the contradiction existing between researchers about the conventional views of women as victims and men as perpetrators, Cho (2012) demonstrated that women are more likely to be victims than men. In the meantime, all controversial studies show support. Contradictory studies have proven that there are factors that are individual or social that may play a part in regard to gender and domestic violence (Hairston, 2017).

Bandura's Social Learning Theory views will co-dominate the research.

Women's roles stereotyped by Haitian culture consist of taking charge of some "matrifocal duties," including cleaning the house, making hand laundry for all family, cooking, helping children with their schoolwork, etc. It is like women are responsible for the survival of their families and become more and a lot more unsecured. When it comes to household chores, Haitian men are excluded whether couples both are earning, or the men are predominant earners. The culture of patriarchy, as suggested by Maseno and Kilonzo (2011), is an essential contributing factor to violence against women according to gender norms within a culture. It is important to note that some advancement dictated by women advocacies are recently made in the Haitian society. However, Haitian women are treated unequally and remain at the peripheries of cultural, social, economic, and political rights. It is a strong gender norm that makes more vulnerable women in Artibonite, Haiti. Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggested that men might learn domestic violence as an established male prototype of behavior from child liveliness. Children with a paternal father figure who are the witness of intimate violence are subject to learn this behavior as a way to solve conflicts in the future (Contreras et al., 2011).

Traditional male and female roles strengthen intimate violence phenomenon (Golden et al., 2013).

Intimate Violence and Household Income

Women face far higher levels of vulnerability, especially those who are utterly dependent on men. Many reasons can explain why a vital rate of Haitian women is unemployed. Most of the women in this region are educated to be a man's charge. The notion that women do not need to work nor have a career since girls are born with their wealth is encouraged by the Haitian culture. From this culture belief, men can become a lawyer, engineer, doctor, and so on, not women. Women have to learn how to be good wives who can take good care of their families. According to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, domination against women in Haitian society is a "predominant social belief" that places women as inferior to men (PADF, 2016). Consequently, in Artibonite high rates of unemployed women have their life under men's control in accordance with this male-dominated country, an attitude encouraged by Marx's conflict theory. Because of this societal conflict, the majority of men in this region jealously hold their economic independence and the opportunity to govern the entire family. According to Golden et al. (2013), women in economic dependency are more likely to be victims of verbal abuse, physical assault, and coercion. The lower financial condition is a crucial factor that increases intimate violence risk. It increased the rate of domestic abuse by 20 percent when comparing the results of a study involving 2,000 urban women with young children (Golden et al., 2013). As per many researchers, income can be a predominant factor in many ways, including support from cultural

views, and violence related to individual traits (Hairston, 2017). However, it is demonstrated that Haitian women, especially those living in the department of Artibonite, called *madan saras* (women traders), bring meaningful changes within the family survival. The *madan saras*, excluded from educational opportunities, represent a broad category of female merchants who are traveling, buying and reselling goods in marketplaces (not conventionally made) and/or along roadsides. Those women are viewed as the *poto mitan* (the pillar of the society). They are those who stay and work no matter how bad the situation within the country is. Hossein (2015) reported from an interview with a director of one Haitian non-governmental organization (NGO): “There is a view that the middle-man is bad, but *madan saras* are my hero. They are the ones coming into the hard-to-reach villages by foot or donkey to buy the produce from the farmers even though there is so much personal risk to them on the roads... We are all very blessed to have *madan saras*.” (Port-au-Prince, 5 October 2011). Despite the challenges, some Haitian women fought this norm and became a healthy and skilled merchant without the chance to be exempt from intimate partner violence. This situation can lead to more risk of violence against women since male partners who are being dependent on their wife for a living may feel inferior. To keep their power, men within such conditions may perpetrate physical and sexual violence against their wives. By exercising their superiority, men will maintain their dominance in this patriarchal society (Jewkes, 2002; Francoeur & Noonan, 2004).

Intimate Violence and Employment

Employment for women in and from the department of Artibonite (from, when desiring to work in Port-au-Prince) stays an exemption. In their report, *Politique d'Égalité Femmes Hommes 2014-2034*, Baranyi and Champ (2019) acknowledged 43.9% of women engaged in an economic activity are merchants, 37.5% work in the agricultural sector, and 10.7% and 6% work in service sectors and other sectors, respectively (Baranyi & Champ, 2019). Recently, some progress has been made since the application of the amendment of the Parliament in 2012, establishing a 30% quota for women in all elected and appointed positions at the national level. The same quota was added by the 2015 Electoral Decree for local councils and political candidates (USAID/Haiti, 2017). Consequently, the percentage went a little bit more, but the same struggle exists since preference is still given to men over women (IRB, 2019). Compared to men, “women are 20 percentage points more like to be unemployed” (Singh & Barton-Dock, 2015). This percentage of unemployed women and the extreme poverty of the country put women at risk for intimate violence, as they cannot live up their abusers (Clark, 2006). In March 2016, the MINUSTAH (United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti) reported that women face high unemployment rates, persistent horizontal and vertical segregation in the labor market. They are also victims of a gender wage gap, particularly in the private sector. For those women living in Artibonite, a rural area, the situation is worst. According to the MINUSTAH (2016), women in rural areas are exposed to high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment. Those women have little access to basic services and are involved slightly in decision-making connecting to situations that affect them.

From an interview made in October 2017 by a professor at the University of Quebec in Outaouais (UQO) with the Research Directorate who has been working for over 30 years with women's group representatives, it was revealed that without "parenn" (meaning contact), there are not any jobs for women (IRB Report, 2019). Ability and competency are viewed as secondary. Women are also put at the second plan for the job position. They work mostly in low-level areas and get paid less than men affirmed the Department of State (2017) and the United Nations Country Team in Haiti (2017). Few women take the initiative to become an entrepreneur by getting engaged in individual micro strategies to sustain themselves and their children. They are not very visible in small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) confirmed the Department of State (2017). Based on these studies, it would seem that unemployment increases the risk of the occurrence of abusive relationships against women in Artibonite. The state of being in charge of all the expenses within the house may make a man irritated and ready to rough up his wife/concubine and children. In the meantime, it is more reasonable for the victims to remain in this abusive situation if they think that enduring this situation costs less than the exposed consequences in ending the relationship (WHO, 2002).

Legislative and Judicial Responses

One other factor of partner violence is the weakness of the criminal justice system in the country. Various international treaties adopted by Haiti support human rights and individual liberties of every Haitian, including all men and women. The Constitution of 1987 and its criminal laws condemn violations of the rights and the protection of all Haitian citizens. Those dispositions seem to be ineffective in solving the widespread

problem named gender-based violence. It occurs across all classes. There is not a specific legislation against domestic violence, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence perpetrated on women (Fuller, 1999). In Haiti, rape is criminalized but not in cases where the partner is the offender. Haiti adopted the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women of 1979 because it is a state party to the American Convention since September 27, 1977. In its article 1 of the American Convention, the obligation is made to all States parties to respect and guarantee all rights and freedoms of citizens without any discrimination. The right to equal protection under the law is also imposed on States Parties in its article 24. All of the dispositions aim to make women free from violence and discrimination (OHCHR, n.d.). Unfortunately, in its report dated 2009, the Organization of American States recognized that “most cases of discrimination and violence against women are never formally investigated, prosecuted and punished by the justice system in Haiti.” The worst is the fact that victims and families are often ill-treated when attempting to be assisted by the criminal justice system, and lost confidence in founding remedies when wrongs are committed (OAS, 2009). The commission advanced that for the few cases registered for prosecution, the authorities do not consider them as acts of discrimination and violence against women. They are not considered as dangerous as other crimes. That is the reason why these cases end in the payment of a fine to the state or by a financial indemnity to the victim. No need for additional criminal action against the perpetrators, an attitude guided by the discriminatory socio-cultural patterns as determined by the Organization of American States (2009). Women should

be wise and submissive. This is the reason why the country has this lack of laws addressing all forms of violence against women in public and private spheres.

It is true that the Constitution of 1987 stipulates the principles of equality and non-discriminations, but the legal framework based of the French legal tradition is still inadaptable considering the fact that the Haitian Civil (partially amended in October 1982) and the penal codes (slightly modified by an executive decree in July 2005) have not been reformed. Resolving violence toward women is not a priority, especially in the case of intra-family abuse (OAS, 2009). Many sources reveal that women victims of violence who are trying to have justice face various obstacles (Human Rights Watch, 2014; Boston College Law School *et al.*, 2014; US, 2015). Some were denounced in 2013 by the United Nations when citing as causes for the weakness of the legal system: the medical certificate, the “amicable arrangements,” and the lack of rigor and negligence when recording complaints (UN, 2013). The medical certificate seems to a tremendous obstacle. According to the “Code d’Instruction Criminelle,” a medical certificate must be delivered by a certified professional (considered as a helper of the justice system) to demonstrate the existence of the offense. The medical certificate is not the only way to prove an infraction. However, it is the most appropriate way to support a criminal action for such violence since it is quasi difficult to have the testimony of a witness. In case someone was a witness of the fact, he/she would refuse to testify in courts for fear of reprisals (Hurwitz, 2013). Without witness testimonies and/or medical certificate, the judge is unable to charge the offender. Additionally, the qualification and the appropriate sentence would depend on this medical certificate, which should be delivered to the

victim within 72 hours after the violence (Haiti Justice, n.d.). Without a medical certificate granting incapacity of work to the victim, it is likely that the perpetrator would receive a lighter sanction (Hurwitz, 2013). And, in case of rape, the medical certificate is mandatory to initiate criminal charges (UN, 2014). Any pursuit can be made without a medical certificate (Armstrong, 2014). It is then important to note that obtaining a medical certificate is not easy for everyone, particularly those in rural areas. The inability to access the medical facility, the fear and shame of being examined particularly by a male doctor, the lack of awareness of the public health services constitute various barriers in obtaining this act so important for the upcoming trial (Boston College Law School et al., 2014). The comportment of the police is not different from the other authorities. These officers do not seem to be interested in protecting women against imminent threats for partners. These kinds of infraction are considered a private and low-priority affair. When forced to execute the protections orders usually enacted by the chief of parquet (the public attorney), the police officers are not motivated and not adequately enforced and monitoring this decision. The protection order was an implementation of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women to address the concern over the conduct of the police that failed to assist women victims (OAS, 2009). Sexual harassment frequently occurs within the community. However, it is not specially prohibited by Haitian law even though the labor code stipulates that men and women have the same rights and obligations (Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, 2018).

Government Attitudes/Corruption

Men are encouraged by the Haitian culture to uphold the concept of a “proper” male conduct. Men have been socialized into violence, while women are educated to be passive. Women are defined as the sexual properties of men. These conditions are corroborated by the government’s attitudes on supporting its members or friend’s attitudes against women (regardless of their class) (Denzin, 1984). Who can forget the case of Nice Simon, the mayor of Tabarre, who was also a famous actress in Haiti? Her face and body were covered in bruises and have been circulated on social networks. She was maltreated on multiple occasions by her partner, as reported by Amélie Baron, an RFI reporter (RFI, 2018). The aggressor, Jean-Yves Léonard, best friend of the President, is the landlord of the house occupied by the presidential family. He is well known in the public administration; also, he is one of the Prime Minister’s best friends. The mayor was strong enough to finally publicly shed light on the abuse that occurred. Nevertheless, the police did not make any arrest. Despite the blatant assault and the attempted murder against the actress, no one dares to arrest the “energetic” man who enjoys his immunity because of his relationships to the President, the Prime Minister as well as to the judges and commissioners for whom he organizes periodic receptions (Le National, 2019; Zone 509, 2018; France TV Info, 2018). Neither the President nor the Prime Minister said a word despite the media coverage of more than one dozen authentic pictures of the victim on social networks with injuries, bruises, and bites. The victim filed a complaint against her abuser since she chose the path of justice that should be the best choice in a democratic regime where the rule of law should be one of the pillars on

which society rests. Unfortunately, the relation of the aggressor with the authorities won the case. After three months, to everyone's surprise, the judge working on the case canceled the warrant against Jean-Yves Leonard and reduced the charges brought against him which retrograded the case on a simple infraction with no regard for the blows received in the face and right eye, the bite in the left shoulder, the bumps in the back, the sequestration and others (Le National, 2019; Le Médiateur, 2019). This fact is one of many cases involving members or friends of the government who are considered as "untouchable."

One other attitude of the authorities is to dissuade victims from pursuing their complaint since they believe that a trial will be a "public humiliation" for the aggressor. This is one of the reasons why the judges often release suspects who had been arrested for domestic violence or rape, reported US (2015) on "Country Reports, 2015". The First Instance Court of Jérémie, the capital of Grand'Anse Department released, in February 2018, 16 of 29 individuals arrested for rape. The prosecutor alleged that the victims had signed statements to withdraw their claims (US, 2018). MINUJUSTH (United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti) emphasized the fact that in rural areas, prosecutors encouraged victims to settle their criminal cases out of court (US, 2018). The time makes for the judicial procedures until the audience discourages the victims who often try to arrange with the abuser by accepting monetary compensation (Armstrong, 2014).

Intimate Violence and Fear of Reprisals and Social Stigma

Stigma seems to play an immense role in how women endure intimate violence. The term stigma is not merely referred to as negative stereotypes. This stigma is relevant

to various conditions, including cultural, legal, and biomedical, that afflict people in so many ways. According to Crocker et al. (1998), shame is the consequence of an underestimate social value. Through a framework called “The Mental Illness Stigma” the authors identified stigma as a social methodology that can be confirmed at many levels. Through this perspective, stigma is viewed as a protection for group survival that preserves themselves from threats to group subsistence (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005). In the sociology and anthropology fields, researchers initiated some theoretical perspectives that examine the approach where mental illness stigma is socially constructed and reinforced. These researchers saw stigma as a negative ongoing socialization process that exists in a community (Jones et al., 1984). According to them, mental illness stigma is deemed as a concept that is both culturally and socially devalued. Researchers focused on multiple perspectives, those with a history of mental illness that are negatively affected by stigmas, those projecting stigmas as well as the general public.

Other researchers, particularly Link and Phelan (2013), analyzed stigma from different views, including structural stigma and cultural manifestations of stigma. They explained how and when stigmatization happens. According to them, stigmatization is a cultural and political process that can be used “to identify stereotype and label differentness in socially devalued individuals, which ultimately leads to disapproval, rejection, exclusion, and discrimination” (Link & Phelan, 2001). In their approach, they identified power as a subtheme of cultural stigmatization, in a sociopolitical process, that permanently marks individuals from hurtful scars. In other words, stigma can be determined, created, and applied as an instrument to establish power.

Many are the abused Haitian women who have chosen to remain in an abusive relationship because of cultural stigmatization. They are ashamed of themselves. They have been suffered from social pain, including rejection, exclusion, and ostracism. Judgments from others intimidate them to report any type of abuse. They fear to reveal the humiliating treatments they are experiencing at home or in public. Instead of being familiarized with them, the society chooses to label them “bad spouse,” “bad parent” (in case they have children) in case they are trying to denounce the fact and leave the uncomfortable situation (Richard et al., 2018).

After surviving relentless violence within their family or on public areas, Haitian women in Artibonite continue to be subjected to social stigma. The community is more clement toward the abusers than the victims of domestic violence (Yamawaki et al., 2012). These survivors are unfairly judged and prefer not to report violence cases. Reporting such cases will bring shame to them and their children since they are characterized by structural gender inequalities that are a perception of adherence to socially defined norms of men or women (USAID, 2016). Almost all violence against women is universally underreported to authorities for many reasons including the fear of reprisal, the economic and psychological dependence, and the anticipation that the police will not pursue the offenders as it does for other assaults (UNODC, 2018). The executive director of U.N. WOMEN, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, stated “We still do not know the true extent of violence against women, as the fear of reprisals, impact of not being believed, and the stigma borne by the survivor — not the perpetrator — have silenced the voices of millions of survivors of violence and masked the true extent of

women's continued horrific experiences" (UN WOMEN, 2018). In the department of Artibonite, Haiti, which is a rural area, domestic violence is rarely reported. According to the coordinator of "Fanm Deside" the rate of domestic violence is very high in rural areas, and the majority of them are unreported. "Abused women do not want to file a complaint" since women understand that it is a "habit and custom of Haitians stem from a patriarchal society, and thus society thinks that it is normal for a man to hit a woman during an argument," concluded the coordinator (MADRE, 2012). From an interview with Thompson Reuters Foundation in 2017, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) acknowledged that stigma and shame including fear of reprisal from the community are the primary reasons of under-reported cases of sexual violence (Thompson Reuters Foundation, 2017).

Summary and Conclusions

The prevalence of partner violence against women in Artibonite, Haiti, is a phenomenon that is under-studied and also under-reported. It is a more significant problem among the families, the Artibonitian's community, and the development of the Haitian nation than currently known. Both the present and the future generation are affected by such a problem; violence against a person will be later repeated through the families and the community (Zimmerman, 1994; Contreras et al., 2011). Beliefs, ideas, cultural norms, economic, and political conditions encourage men to perpetrate violence against their wife or concubine and to not being charged criminally. Men are educated by those norms in the etiology of gender-based violence to be the "chef" (meaning executioner) of the family and the ones who maintain order in the family by punishing

their partner (women) in case of any failure. Men must keep alive the stereotypes learned and consequently keep their power at the ultimate level (Chappelow, 2019; Jewkes, 2002; Francoeur & Noonan, 2004). Factors such as gender, income, unemployment, weakness of the justice system, complicity of the government, fear, reprisal, and stigma seem to be prominent factors that affect the currency of domestic violence in the department of Artibonite. In the meantime, cultural stigma may impact abused women who are ashamed to be negatively labeled by supporters of the aggressors and prefer to keep secret the offense and deal with it as a personal matter (Beaulaurier et al., 2008).

This study addressed a gap in the literature regarding domestic violence against women in Artibonite, Haiti. In Chapter 2, I presented previous research on abused women in this region. The following chapter will provide a description of the study's methodology used to examine women's perceptions about this phenomenon.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the views, and beliefs of women who experienced abuse in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, and the factors that influenced domestic violence. This research filled the gap in understanding the characteristics and the magnitude of the violence within the family. Qualitative interviews covered the lack of information on the problem and allowed a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influenced violence against women in this area (McLeod, 2017). Seventeen women who experienced abuse, in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, were interviewed for research purposes. This section covers information about the research design and rationale, the researcher's role, methodology, participants, data collection and analysis techniques, ethical research, and reliability and validity.

Research Design and Rationale

This study addressed the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the meaning of domestic violence to the Haitian women in the department of Artibonite?

RQ2: What factors inhibit or support a woman reporting domestic violence to the proper authorities?

An in-depth interview approach was applied to the collection of information from participants. Using semistructured interviews offered more flexibility by facilitating two-way communication and produced reliable and comparable qualitative data (Keller & Conradin, n.d.). Narrative interviews provided the participants the opportunity to freely

explain their perceptions about the domestic violence phenomenon (see Jovchelovitch & Bauer, 2000).

Role of the Researcher

According to Edmond and Kennedy (2017), the researcher's role is to guide the study, aligning the research problem to the framework of the research design for the collection of data that helps in providing answers to the research questions. As a researcher, I made sure that I selected the appropriate research method and design, recruited participants whose experiences could address the research questions, decided on the instrument, collected and analyzed the data, and described the findings.

My professional background consists of being a lawyer, then a public attorney, a president's delegate, and founder and director of an organization that defends women's rights in Gonaives, Haiti. Additionally, as a founder of a K to 7 school, I am close to children who have suffered from the compartment of a violent parent, mostly their father. My background in many roles equips me with the experience and ability to be an unbiased decision-maker. My role as a researcher was to preserve the most vigorous ethical standards to safeguard the study's results from personal biases and opinions. All data (relevant or not) were included, and their interpretation conformed to the participants' observations. Questions that might encourage a specific answer and those affecting the participants' answers to the next question were avoided (Shah, 2019).

When dealing with the use of human participants in research, a researcher needs to be aware that potential risks and ethical issues are controlled throughout the study. Ethical issues need to be directed before conducting a survey, beginning an investigation,

data collection and data analysis, and reporting, sharing, and storing the data (Creswell, 2014). The rights and welfare of the participants were protected. It is vital to comply with the researcher's responsibilities, which are informed consent, respondents' safety, confidentiality, and respect for privacy (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). To ensure that the basic ethical principles were followed, all participants received information about the research and were voluntarily sign a consent form for their participation. In the letters of informed consent to respondents, I included information regarding the purpose of the study. The participants were clearly informed of what was discussed and how their identities would be kept confidential. According to Rudestam and Newton (2015), the typical two ethical issues are that the participants are not fully informed about the consent and are not safely conducting a research study. Although engaged directly in the interviews, I ensured that proper standards in the research study were managed to avoid contamination and bias.

Methodology

According to Heppner et al. (2016), the research methodology's selection requires attention to the topic of study, the research objective, and the researcher's understanding of the issue. From the three different sources of methods elucidating research questions, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods, I favored the qualitative method to investigate the individuals' experiences, views, beliefs, and motivations. The qualitative approach is a process that refers to inductive data analysis that delivers an in-depth explanation of a phenomenon from participants' perspectives (Lewis, 2015). Rather than fixed, qualitative research is flexible, and it helped provide direct insight into how

women experienced abuse from an intimate partner. My choice of the qualitative approach allowed me to explore and interpret the lived experiences of abused women in Artibonite, Haiti (see Mennicke et al., 2015). Rudestam and Newton (2015) indicated that lived experiences and relatives with stories from individuals' experiences could lead to a deeper appreciation of the phenomenon studied. A qualitative approach covered the lack of information on abuse against women and allowed a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence violence against women in this area, a method that transcended measuring specific variables (McLeod, 2017; Leppakoski et al., 2014).

Research design is an overall strategy used in science, social science, and many other disciplines. It is one of the most critical decisions made by a researcher immediately after identifying the research topic and the questions. A research design constitutes the blueprint for the research process by deciding on the study's progression from the research purpose/questions until the outcomes (McGregor, 2018; Abutabenjeh & Jaradat, 2018). According to Sacred Heart University (n.d.), the research design is a comprehensive process that helps collect and analyze the data for a better understanding of the topic. Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018) confirmed that the research design covers these three primary stages: (a) raising a question for examination, (b) assembling data to answer the question, and (c) offering an answer to the problem. Despite the different terminologies used by researchers, I understand that research design is the general plan, including research strategies and methods concerning the data collection and analysis used to answer my research questions (Saunders & Thornhill, 2012). Creswell (1994, 2003) presented two types of research designs: quantitative and qualitative, that may

direct researcher's choice. The qualitative design was preferred in the initial exploratory, experimental phase to capture the phenomenon's magnitude (Padgett, 1998).

Unstructured interviews with open-ended questions disclosed the respondents' understandings about the subject under investigation (Leavy, 2017). The qualitative design used for this study was a logical method to answer questions relative to the meaning of the family violence, experiences, and perspectives of these Haitian women facing abuse in Haiti, especially in the department of Artibonite. This design helped to capture information from each participant who had his unique perspective on the problem. As the analyst for the interviews, I got the possibility to better report the story of intimate partner violence. Using this design filled the gap by understanding the domestic violence in this undeveloped country. Additionally, the use of this design was selected by the fact that I was familiar with the population studied. I am originated from Gonaives (capital of Artibonite) and was employed for more than three years by the Minister of Justice as Commissaire du Gouvernement (Public attorney) and by the President of Haiti as Déléguée départementale de l'Artibonite (Governor but nominated not elected) for sixteen months. Furthermore, as an independent lawyer, I am the founder of an organization that defends women's rights in Gonaives. These past experiences gave me some professional knowledge about domestic violence and justified the choice of using a qualitative design (Padgett, 1998). However, I put away all predetermined conceptions to better scrutinize the experience from the respondents' perspectives. Data were collected focusing on interviews and narratives to produce a better description of these women's experiences and document the Haitian women's situation.

The study was phenomenological since it helped collect information from respondents about a phenomenon (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2016). Thus, a phenomenological approach was used to gather and organize the perceptions of adult women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, relative to their viewpoints on domestic violence perpetrated by their partners. Creswell (2002) affirmed: “a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon; phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (pp.57–58). An inductive, iterative process was applied (Kekeya, 2016). As stated in Maxwell (2005), “the strengths of qualitative research derive primarily from its inductive approach, its focus on specific situations or people, and its emphasis on words rather than numbers” (p.22). Data were analyzed, and results were viewed in the context of the principal structure of the experience (Creswell, 2016).

Participant Selection Logic

Data collection from the sample is also an essential measure for a researcher to consider (Babbie, 2017). For this research, the selection was: (a) adult women (i.e., 18 years old and older), (b) married in heterosexual relationships or being a concubine in time of the abuse, (c) living in the department of Artibonite; (d) victims of partnership aggression, (e) participants of all social status, (f) participants of all educational level, (g) comprised on a broad range of ages, (h) women of different religious backgrounds, and (i) not living with the abuser. These women from diverse organizations working in the department shared the characteristic of being battered or abused by their partners.

Working with members within such a population of interest provided in-depth insight into family violence's phenomenon to justify generalizing the situation theoretically from the sample considered (Laerd dissertation, 2012; Patton, 2015). The researcher's responsibility is to decide on the sample size to explore and the type of sampling method to use in the study. In this research, the sample size was 17 participants that reflect the research questions. Generally, within qualitative research, the sample size is small. However, using many women organizations working in the department of Artibonite imposed the possibility of increasing the sample size. Thus, the cycle of data collection was continued until no new data emerged during the interviews. Data saturation was reached when the identified themes were unneeded. The study could be replicated at this phase if used the same protocols adopted in this research (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Upon initial contact, I addressed the participant and the subject's questions and concerns and was agree upon the date and time of the phone call discussions. Issues relating to informed consent and protection of the respondent's confidentiality were explained at the beginning of the sessions. I started the process of informed consent with the recruitment of the participants.

Instead of being interviewed face-to-face, the participants were interviewed by phone since this option was the most appropriate for the Haitian women living in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, in this time of the global COVID-19 pandemic that limited direct contacts. The date and time of the telephone meeting were scheduled conjointly with the participant. We both worked to ensure that the discussion went smoothly without external intrusions, noise, and interruptions.

Instrumentation

For this study, I used three instruments: a demographic data sheet (see Appendix A & B), the interview guide (see Appendix C & D), and a debriefing form. Based on the research purpose, I created a demographic questionnaire that collected information about each participant: age, education level, income source, marital status, number of years in partnership, number of children within the household. This form was presented to each participant at the beginning of the interview with the precaution of explaining that it was not affect her testimonies and that it was be kept strictly confidential. This form took less than 5 minutes to complete.

I developed the interview guide derived from the research questions, research purpose, and literature review data. I started the interview with small talk and by showing genuine interest in the experience of the participant. The interview guide was used for every participant and was changed slightly over time as we were making progress (Moustakas, 1994). Including the procedure steps, such as consent and debriefing, the interviews were set up to 45 minutes each.

The study debriefing form had its foundation on the research process and was used at the end of each interview. The participant and I revised the answers. After clarifying any concerns or questions that the participant could have, I asked the abused woman about her agreement to the answers noted. This process took less than 10 minutes.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I initially contacted the board members of the women organization working within the department of Artibonite to explain the project and to be able to post flyers on their facilities. I also hope that individuals of these organizations were willing to help with study recruitment. A brief description of the proposed research was posted in several local women organizations with my contact number and Haiti's address. Those who were interested should contact the researcher and, if the criteria were met and accepted to be involved in the study, they were invited to schedule interview dates and times.

At the telephone meeting, I introduced myself as a graduate student at Walden University for a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Homeland Security. Then, I read for the participant the consent form before participating in the research. In this consent form were indicated (a) the background information, (b) the procedures for the analysis, (c) the voluntary character of the survey, (d) the risks and benefits of the study, (e) the researcher's contact information, (f) the possibility to be retracted from the survey, and (g) the privacy. There was no inducement for participants to this study; they were voluntary. In case someone did not feel comfortable to continue with the process, she could withdraw herself by notifying me. The respondents were interviewed in some suitable conditions. At the end of each interview, the participant was debriefed, and her questions were answered. Only me had access to the respondents' answers, which were secured and stored on a protected file for at least five years, as mandated by the Institutional Review Board.

For this study, the target population was adult women abused by their partners in the department of Artibonite, Haiti. Their primary language is Creole. According to Behr (2016), to determine inconsistencies between two versions, the back-translation method is crucial. This method consists of translating a survey back into the original language. Therefore, since I am familiar with the study area and fluent in Creole, I used the back-translation method to translate the interview questions into the population's primary language. A person trained for the circumstance, fluent in Creole and English, back-translated the questions, and the respondents' answers into English.

For this investigation, I conducted in-depth interviews with respondents. Although considered time consuming and expensive, I prioritized this approach for its ability to study people with perceptions, experiences, and concerns. Furthermore, it provided me a better connection with respondents who needed to feel confident and secure. Seidman (1998) recommended a proper rapport between the researcher and the participant to determine the nature of the participant's thoughts, feelings, and engagement. There was, with each contributor, one telephone interview lasting 45-60 minutes. A series of open-ended questions were addressed to the respondent. Follow-up contact was made for the revision of the data to ensure the accuracy of the initial interpretation. Two options for documenting the interview were offered to each participant: 1) I took notes during and after the interview; 2) I audiotaped the interview. Giving the participant the choice of audio taping the interview brought more confidentiality during the interview; the participant felt more secure to report her feelings without sharing more time with me to write down her stories. In both cases, at the end of

each interview, the notes were transcribed into typewritten transcripts, and the audiotapes were destroyed after transcription. Thoughts, feelings, impressions, and concerns were recorded in diary notes that served to identify any biases on each participant's observations and those from me that could affect interpretations of the data.

Open-ended questions followed by probes addressed the areas not covered by respondents. From general to specific, the qualitative interview was opened with some broad open questions (see Appendix C & D). Then spontaneous probes reflecting a particular area were introduced for more information on a previously unknown experience to the researcher (Padgett, 1998).

Data Analysis Plan

Since this study was recorded in a different language, the audio was first transcribed into written text in Haitian Creole, then translated in English and transcribed into written text to facilitate the analysis of the data gathered (Walden University IRB requirements). The phenomenological approach I selected helped me performing a content analysis of the interview data (Moustakas, 1994). I used margin notes to gain an understanding of the phenomenon studied. I compared the participants' testimonies and looked for similarities. Significant statements, quotations, or sentences pronounced by participants about their experiences on partnership violence were identified on a list as "horizons", as mentioned Moustakas (1994, p. 120). All these statements were grouped into themes to facilitate an appropriate description of the respondents' experiences about the phenomenon. Last, I wrote the "essence", which I viewed as the "common

experiences” of the participants to produce an assumption of their perspectives on the subject (Creswell, 2007, p.62).

Issues of Trustworthiness

Creswell (2007) recommended the establishment of the trustworthiness of a research study by including the use of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability as equivalent characters for internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Below, through the use of the previously stated concepts, I showcased how trustworthiness was fostered with participants.

Credibility

According to Ravitch and Carl (2016), credibility is the most significant characteristic of determining the trustworthiness of data and its interpretation. I followed the researcher’s responsibilities, which are informed consent, the participants’ safety, confidentiality, and respect for privacy (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). To enhance credibility, I gave each respondent the possibility to refuse to participate in the study. Data obtained from the interviews came from volitional abused women who contributed to this project by offering ideas, thoughts about their experience without fear and stigma from other women of the organization (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Although engaged directly in the interviews, I ensured that proper standards in the research study were managed to avoid contamination and bias.

I also shared the transcribed interview with the participant to confirm her words and perceptions’ accuracy and build trust between the researcher and the participant. Ravitch and Carl (2016) mentioned that the study participants were the only ones who

could decide if the findings reflected the phenomenon studied. Participants must endure that the results are credible and accurate. Additionally, I informed each of the respondents about their right to review a copy of the research results analyzing and processing the data (Creswell, 2014). I showed them my prolonged engagement, which is one element of credibility. This contact boosted the study's credibility and procured a better understanding of this phenomenon, which is violence against women in Artibonite, Haiti.

With their vast research experience, my committee members reviewed the analysis process and findings based on Moustaka's (1994) adjustment. With the study participants, I planned a traditional approach of checking at their second meeting where they had the chance to question me. Creswell (2007) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) affirmed that member checking is the fact to return to study participants to share the results and consequently obtain the study findings' credibility. Finally, I was cautious about saturation. I continued the interview sessions until any new information was provided.

Transferability

External validity is, per Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), the causal inference that a research study embraces. With the transferability, consumers of the research can decide in transferring the information read to their practical context (Stringer, 2014). To establish generalizability, a study needs to contain a thick description and variation in selecting the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The study must be able to be applied to other contexts. I used thick description as an excellent help to assure that findings

from my research could be transferred to different settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Independent researchers will find ways to confirm where these study findings were reasonable and the methods dependable.

Dependability

Dependability was controlled by the use of audio trails and triangulation. Reliability and objectivity can be imposed by a researcher's decisions making. The researcher must also generate an audio trail as solid documentation of procedures to determine the study findings' dependability and conformability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data collection process is one of the most important considerations that I took into account. Bias can happen in the data collection process. To avoid such a situation, I was vigilant about the transcription and member checks (Carlson, 2010). For this study, I used manual field notes, tape recordings, analysis records, data synthesis records, process notes, and instrument development notes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By doing so, I ensured the reliability and dependability of the collection process (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Confirmability

The transcripts shared with the participants ensured that the data obtained is true and accurate. Participants did view their answers, revised them, and made appropriate corrections if needed. Member checking was the opportunity for participants to check particular aspects of interpreting of the data they provided (Creswell, 2014). In a private journal, I made regular entries that explained my decisions all through the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To reduce the effects of bias, I kept in my reflexive

journal my notes. All of these precautions ensured that trustworthiness is present within the research.

Ethical Procedures

According to Heppner et al. (2016), from selecting the research topic to further requirements and conclusions, the researcher should remember that ethical principles must be applied at all levels of research design. The researcher must demonstrate an ethical responsibility toward the security of the information provided by respondents. I complied with Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements.

The WHO ethical and safety recommendations for research on domestic violence against women was referred in this study (WHO, 2001). Thus, protecting confidentiality was a critical way to verify women's safety and data quality. Scrupulous selection, specialized training, especially for translators, and support for the researcher and assistants, was a second important measure. Furthermore, appropriate actions to reduce any possible distress caused by the study were imposed and, if other resources exist, the researcher could refer women in need of support for assistance.

Summary

For this phenomenological study, I used in-depth individual interviews to examine the abused women's perceptions in the department of Artibonite, Haiti, and the factors that influence domestic violence. I reviewed the research design and rationale for conducting this study, my role as a researcher, sampling procedures to identify participants, data collection, and analysis. I have discussed participants' rights and the precautions taken to ensure that the participants' safety and rights are protected. This

methodology chapter was followed by Chapter 4, where I analyzed and interpreted the domestic violence findings among women in Artibonite, Haiti.

Chapter 4: Results

The qualitative study aims to explore the experiences, views, and beliefs of Haitian women and the factors that influence domestic violence. The viewpoints of the abused women within the department of Artibonite, Haiti, will contribute to the body of knowledge necessary to inform the public about violence against Haitian women, which is a societal problem rooted in Haitian culture. Describing these experiences will fill the gap in understanding the characteristics and the magnitude of the violence within the family context. The richness in understanding the phenomenon will facilitate appropriate decisions to relieve these women and the imposition of proper policies that will reduce such abuse.

To achieve this goal, I used a qualitative phenomenological design in which 17 abused women in Artibonite were accepted, after screening their eligibility, to participate in the study. This design aimed to stimulate discussion of the participants' meanings, feelings, and beliefs of what they have experienced as violence during their relationship with an abuser through open-ended questions. The open-ended questions and comments used during each interview encouraged dialogue of the participants' meanings and feelings. These interactions lead to themes and contexts of the Haitian women's experiences in Artibonite on domestic violence.

The proposed inquiry was guided by two research questions: (a) What is the meaning of domestic violence to the Haitian women in the department of Artibonite? and (b) What factors inhibit or support a woman reporting domestic violence to the proper authorities? This chapter will present a description of the participant characteristics, an

analysis, and an interpretation of the findings from the various interviews obtained.

Conclusions will be presented in Chapter 5.

Research Setting

I was forced by the emergence of the Covid-19 virus to avoid face-to-face interviews which I had originally intended. Instead, I chose phone interviews, which were the most appropriate for the population interviewed. The disease also impeded the way I was able to contact the participants. Because the women's organizations did not have their regular meetings, I used the collaboration of the board of some organizations, including FEFBA (Federation des Femmes du Bas Artibonite), OFSA (Organisation des Femmes Solidaires de l'Artibonite), and COFA (Collectif Femmes de l'Artibonite) who provided me names of women who had experience domestic violence at a certain time of their lives. Using the contact information from these organizations, I called potential participants, explained to them the study, and advised them that I would send them a copy of the consent form for their review. To those who agreed to participate, I suggested to set up the time and date when they would be away from kids or other situations that could interrupt the conversation. All women in the study were no longer with their abusers. Consequently, they were without fear of participating in a study related to domestic violence. One of the victims admitted that she felt liberated to tell her stories. Most of the participants being recruited expressed interest in starting the interview as soon as possible. The interviews were scheduled within 2 weeks of the first phone contact. Some psychologists working at the "Centre de Raboteau," a health care

center located in Gonaives, Artibonite, Haiti, were available for anyone that in need of assistance during or after the study.

Demographics

In my sample, I received different demographic characteristics, including age, education, number of children, education, matrimonial status at the time of the abuse, current matrimonial status, religion, and occupation. Regardless of these related differences, the participants shared these characteristics: women over the age of 18 living in Artibonite who were no longer with their abuser but had been abused during the last 5 years. Table 1 shows the participant demographics with a pseudonym assigned to each of them to protect their identities.

Table 1*Participant Demographics (N=17)*

| Participant | Characteristic | | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| | Age | Kids | Education | Marital Status | Current Status | Religion | Income |
| Mimine | 31 | 3 | Elem | Married | Separated | Christian | Merchant |
| Loulouse | 29 | 2 | Middle | Free union | Single | Baptist | None |
| Lolotte | 48 | 2 | College | Married | Separated | Baptist | Merchant |
| Manette | 33 | 3 | College | Married | Separated | Baptist | Teacher |
| Foufoune | 38 | 1 | College | Free union | Single | Catholic | Teacher |
| Marie | 35 | 4 | Middle | Married | Separated | Baptist | Housekeeper |
| Lois | 25 | 2 | College | Free union | Single | Baptist | Merchant |
| Josiane | 49 | 3 | College | Free union | Single | Baptist | None |
| Ruth | 41 | 2 | Elem | Free union | Single | Vodou | Merchant |
| Marise | 32 | 1 | College | Married | Separated | Catholic | Merchant |
| Manoune | 36 | 2 | College | Married | Divorced | Mormon | Teacher |
| Laurie | 62 | 2 | Middle | Free union | Single | Catholic | Seamstress |
| Mama | 25 | 2 | College | Free union | Single | Christian | Businesswoman |
| Fifi | 32 | 1 | College | Married | Divorced | Baptist | Businesswoman |
| Lourdie | 36 | 2 | College | Free union | Single | Catholic | Administrator |
| Rose | 33 | 3 | High | Married | Separated | Baptist | None |
| Liline | 35 | 4 | High | Married | Separated | Catholic | Merchant |

The study sample included 17 adult females identified as Haitians women residing in diverse regions in Artibonite, Haiti. They were self-identified as domestic violence survivors separated, divorced, or widow, and their mean age was 34. While the oldest participant was 62 years old, the youngest participant was 25 years old, which represented a range of 37 years.

Respondents reported their past marital status as married (50%) and being a concubine (50%) with a current marital status of separated (41%), divorced (12%), single (41%), and widow (6%). All interviewees had children. The majority of them reported having three or two children. The mean number of children within the families was two.

Another significant variation is the occupational situation. The majority of the respondents reported their own employment (small commerce), three reported being employed, and three of them reported being unemployed at the time of the violence but became self-employed after the separation.

There is a variation in the participants' educational attainment. Most of the respondents reported being in a college-level (university in Haiti) (59%), two in high school (12%), two reported being in elementary school (12%), and three in middle school (17%). This situation leads to the fact that, in this study, the participants reflect evidence that women abuse ranges over socioeconomic and educational lines.

Respondents' Narratives

Mimine and her husband were both teenagers when married. After having three kids, Mimine's husband noticed that his wife was not the type of person he would like to have. Mimine was considered as a housewife and was forbidden to go out. Her husband

severely beat her after she went to a funeral. She got her cheekbone broken. Mimine's parents took her with them and gave her the medical care she needed. The perpetrator also yelled, said bad words to the children, and did not assist them. Mimine went to the court (Justice de Paix), which made her husband swear not to continue with the aggression. Mimine was 31 years old and was separated from her husband since this conflict happening 3 years ago.

Loulouse was a single woman aged 29 years old who could not contact anyone, including her siblings and parents. The woman discovered that her partner had an affair with one other woman and let him know about it. They barely have sex and rarely talk. One night, the partner tried to have sex with his concubine who refused. His partner pulled her arm, pushed her, and yelled at her. The next day the woman took the kids to her sister's house and ended her relationship with her husband. Their partnership ended for the last 3 years. Loulouse was ashamed and could not report the fact. "Haitian men can beat women as they do for their kids anytime they want," stated Loulouse.

Lolotte was a 48-year-old woman who reported that her husband was saying terrible words to her. She said that her husband did not care about the household, as he should. There was, sometimes, no food for the kids. Their needs were not being met. Their relation ended 3 years ago when the husband abandoned the family to be with another woman. Lolotte believed that it is society's fault because men were told that they could do whatever they wanted to correct women. That is why she did not report the abuses.

Manette was 33 years old and gave birth to 3 children. Her husband was not working during the relationship and decided to abandon her and the kids. He went to the

capital to live with his parents. He never came back, although he got a job and a better life. This relationship ended 4 years ago. Manette said she kept silent due to her beliefs about Christianity.

Foufoune had one child with her partner and got to endure the humiliation of seeing him accompanied by his mistress inside their residence. She was belittled in the presence of this woman, and she considered that her dignity was attacked. When Foufoune reacted to the situation, she was beaten by her husband. He pretended that he was a nice and good man and convinced everyone, even Foufoune's mom, that the evil person was Foufoune and he needed to correct her. The victim informed that she could not report the abuses because the community, even though her mom, already made her responsible for the maltreatment.

Marie was a woman aged 35 years old who worked hard to keep her family alive. Her husband regularly took her stuff and gave it to other women. He wanted to get control of everything. He began by sleeping outside the house, going to clubs, and coming to the house late. When Marie talked about that, he got mad and beat her. He was trying to kill her with a shovel's handle. She was accompanied by a women's organization (FEFBA) to the court and was told to hire an attorney who could not do anything. After spending \$H 4,000, she gave up and ended the relationship two years ago despite the community's advice (pastors and parents of both sides). Marie considered that the next step could be her death.

Lois was a concubine of a man who was always drunk when he came from the night club. Being in this situation, he always beat and slapped his partner. Lois was forbidden

to talk about her condition to others. She could not go out since her partner was really jealous. She got hurt all over her body and left the relationship three years ago since she felt she was treated like an animal. She did not report the abuse since she thinks it would be a waste of time. The community agrees with men to batter women.

Josiane was a 49-year-old woman with a college degree. Without the permission of her parent, she got married and lived in her law mother's house. She gave birth to two kids: a handicapped one and a healthy one. Her husband started to humiliate her, and she could not tell her family about it. Things were getting worse: her husband slapped her, telling her bad words, and asked her to leave the house. The husband's friends were laughing at Josiane. They were aware that the man had a mistress living not too far away. He beat Josiane whenever he wanted to, forced her to have sex with him, and left her with the kids most of the time alone. Josiane gets separated from her husband for almost 3 years and believe that no organization, no one can help women since the social structures make men think that they are always right.

Ruth was a 41-year-old woman who was in a concubine relation. Her partner was the only one capable of talking in the house. He yelled at Ruth and humiliated her in front of everyone, especially in front of mistresses. Last year, she kicked him out and asked her uncle and brother to stay in the house with her until the divorce papers are done. Ruth did not want to report the abuse because she was learned that men are the head of the family.

Marise was married to a man and had one child. She was 32 years old and got no respect from her husband. He always said bad words to her and did not want to go work.

He tried to control Marise's money and send it to his parents living in one other town. Marise was suffered from this relationship, got a stroke, and end up in a wheelchair. Her husband abandoned her in the house and told her that she must sell everything and gave her the money if she wanted him to take care of her. Marise's parents heard about the situation and came to take her with them. Her husband made false statements about her pretexting that she left the house because she had an affair with another man. Marise believed that she did not have to go anywhere to report the situation since the Haitian society believes in men's words.

Manoune was a 36-year-old woman who was married to a man that pretended to be jealous. It turns out that he beat Manoune who couldn't go to the beauty salon, nor visit her parents. One day, after being beaten so severely, Manoune went to the doctor and decided to take the children with her and left the house. This happened 4 years ago. Manoune did not report the abuse. She thinks that everyone in the Haitian society believes that a husband can beat her wife whenever he wants to.

Laurie was a concubine aged 62 years old who gave birth to two children. With her partner, she started a small business, which progressed and became a big store. Because they now have a healthy life, the male partner decided to run the woman's life. He asked the woman to leave the house and started a new affair with a young lady. He put under his new son's name almost all acquisitions. Laurie's sons do not have much. Plus, he tried on many occasions to beat Laurie. Laurie recalled the day her partner put a gun on her. He tried one time to hit her with an electric cord. The man died last year and left the family in need because he transferred under the mistress's son's name buildings

and lands obtained together. Laurie did not take any action since she believed in God's faithfulness.

Mama was 25 years old and was living with her three children's father for ten years. During the last eight years, Mama faced all kinds of problems. Her partner told her whatever he wanted to, was not procuring the food to the kids, and beat them for anything. Mama did not let people know about the abuse for fear of stigma. She ended the relationship 1 year ago and started a new life with one other partner.

Fifi had one child and was 32 years old. She met her husband in her hometown while in school. He told her to leave school and to move with him. Everything was fine until Fifi heard her husband saying that he chose to stay in the house for the kids since he and Fifi were not together anymore. When he knew that Fifi listened to the conversation, he left the house. When he finally came to the house, months after, accompanied by his new woman, he put upside down everything inside the house. Both treat Fifi since they know she was not from the town. Fifi's partner was trying to sell the house without her consent to force her to go back to her village. Fifi reported the fact to FEFBA, a women's organization, and was able to keep the house for her and the kid.

Lourdie was 36 and lived for many years with a man who did not correctly take care of the kids. One day, she saw a message on her partner's phone explaining to someone that he stays in the relationship because of the children. The woman, his partner had an affair with, sent pictures to Lourdie of both of them making love. Lourdie ended the relationship 2 years ago and did not report the negligence. She believed that the community wants that women accept any attitudes coming from men.

Rose, 33, was a concubine who got an affair with a higher educated man. Together they had three children. Rose's partner used big words to hurt her and was talking wrong about Rose's parents. He battered her in her head and all over her body. He did not take care of the children and was engaged in a new relationship with another woman. Rose is single for almost 5 years. Rose did report the abuses to a women's organization that helped her with the physical abuse. However, she could not do anything about the process of child support because she did not have money to hire a lawyer.

Liline was 35; she was married to a man and has four children from the relationship. Soon after their marriage, her husband began to beat, slap, and kick her. One day, her husband tried to choke her. She could not breathe or call for help. One time, she did report the abuse to an employee at the "direction de la condition feminine" (a governmental service for the assistance to women) that told her, after talking to her husband, that this incident was not a big deal. Because of this experience, she never went back and never looked for other assistance. Her husband has been out of the relationship for 1 year and now lives with another woman.

Data Collection

During the data collection, 19 women were screened, but only 17 were eligible to participate in the study. For the first one, she was not directly affected by her partner. According to her story, she was severely beaten by her partner's followers (since he was a pastor). The second respondent did not meet the criteria because she is not living anymore in the Artibonite department.

Based on the participants' schedules, dates and times for the phone interviews were determined. I was the only one conducting the open-ended interview that lasted from 20 to 30 minutes. After collecting data from each interview, a close friend fluent in Creole and English interpreted and translated the participants' answers. Before accessing the interview responses, she did sign the confidentiality form.

Seventeen adult women were interviewed from the timeframe of June 9, 2020, through August 20, 2020. No data were collected before May 29, 2020, the date of the Walden University IRB's approval, number 05-29-20-0620125. At the beginning of the session, I reviewed the consent form and obtained the agreement of the participants that were eligible for the study. With the permission of the participants, the interviews were achieved on speakerphone and recorded with one other phone recorder. I documented by handwritten field notes the interviews to better record my thoughts during the process. I completed the demographic data sheet and at the end of each interview, and I reviewed and completed the debriefing form. The possibility to make changes to their conversation was offered to each participant. However, no one added or removed anything. All the interviews went smoothly and varied from 20 to 30 minutes. Data were collected without any significant issues. I ended each interview by thanking each participant for her participation in the study. All data were stored and locked on a password-protected computer. No data were mishandled or shared with any women organization or any authorities.

During the data collection, the only anticipated circumstance was that some of the participants did not care about the information provided in the consent form or explained

that they already read the consent form sent to them. They showed their anticipation to tell their story and to make sure that their voices are counted. I slowed them down and explained to them that it is the procedure imposed on these types of research. They listened to the reading of the consent form and responded with the words “I consent.”

Findings

Once the phone interviews were done, I retrieved all data recorded on the audiotape, put them in writing word-for-word in Creole into a Microsoft Word document, and saved the transcriptions on my computer. Each transcription was saved according to the number assigned to the participant. Then, I submitted the transcriptions to the colleague who got them translated into English. I reviewed the new transcriptions and started generated themes from the data collection.

The data analysis started with the process of detailing the experiences of each abused woman I interviewed and created a document where I presented a description of the texts, structure, and essence of the narration. I reviewed several times the verbatim of the experiences of each survivor. I valued every participant’s statement, made notes of the side of the new transcriptions, and handed coded the data. Then, I used Nivo 12, qualitative data software, to organize the data. Each statement was transferred into themes through the creation of a coding template dictated by the two research study questions. Through the handed coding, I named a Microsoft Word document template “Participant Number –Coding” made in three columns: the left side for the interview’s transcription; the middle side for the line-by-line coding; and the right side for the identification of the emerging codes (see Table 2).

The notes taken were useful to create the researcher's memos at the bottom of every interview's coding document since the reflective data analysis process is needed in the case of the research nature, which is qualitative (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Table 2

Frequency of Meaning Themes Among Study Participants (N=17)

| Theme | Participants/Total |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Beating | 9 |
| Rape | 5 |
| Forbidden to go out | 2 |
| Slapping | 5 |
| Masochism | 1 |
| Kicking | 1 |
| Pushing | 1 |
| Chocking | 1 |
| Yelling | 3 |
| Pulling arm | 1 |
| Manipulating | 1 |
| Kids' starving | 5 |
| Bad words | 6 |
| Humiliation | 3 |
| Controlling | 1 |
| Neglect | 6 |
| Abandon | 3 |
| Threats | 2 |
| Drinking | 1 |

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Destruction of objects | 1 |
| Stigma | 3 |
| Shame | 1 |
| Men power | 5 |
| Mistress | 9 |
| Joking | 1 |
| Housewife/Slave | 4 |
| Court | 1 |
| Women's organization | 3 |
| Condition Feminine | 1 |
| Blame on victim | 3 |
| Do not want people to know | 2 |
| Women cannot sue men | 2 |
| Society faults/structures | 11 |
| Women cannot speak out | 3 |
| Man becoming jealous | 4 |
| Man do not want to work | 1 |
| Slandering | 3 |
| Reeducation | 10 |
| Assistance for women | 9 |
| New policies | 9 |

Table 3*Example of Transcription Code Book*

| Transcription | Sentence by sentence Coding | Code |
|--|---|--|
| Q: In your opinion, what is domestic violence? | | |
| A: It's when you are being abused by someone living the same house with you. | Being abused by someone living the same house | ABUSER IS NOT STRANGER |
| Q: What kind of acts do you consider violent? | | |
| A: When someone is saying bad words, hurting your feelings belittle you | When partner used bad words and hurt wife's feelings | ABUSER USES BAD WORDS ABUSER HURTS WOMEN'S FEELINGS |
| When someone attack your dignity, bringing other women to the house while you are around. | Men attack women's dignity when bringing mistress to the house without respect to his partner | ABUSER ATTACKS WOMEN'S DIGNITY |
| When someone is beating you is a kind of violence too. | When a husband beats his partner | BEATING |
| Q: What problems have you experienced within Your family? | | |
| A: He was saying bad words to me to hurt my feelings | Male partner used bad words and hurt woman's feelings | PARTNER USED BAD WORDS PARTNER HURT VICTIM'S FEELINGS |
| Q: Has the violence happened on time or at many times? | | |
| A: Many times. | Many times | MANY TIMES |
| Q: Who are the perpetrators? | | |
| A: The father of my son | Father of woman's son | ABUSER WAS THE SON'S DAD |
| Q: What problems are you facing after an abuse? Could you explain that? | | |
| A: I was hurt in love. I lost my dignity, and my self-esteem. I do not trust anyone anymore. | Woman hurts in love, lost her dignity and has low-esteem. | HURT IN LOVE. LOST OF DIGNITY |
| | Woman lost beliefs on men | VICTIM SUFFERED LOW-ESTEEM VICTIM LOST BELIEFS ON MEN |
| Q: How did it make you feel? | | |
| A: Sometimes, I felt angry. Even though he spoke | Victim felt angry | VICTIMS FELT ANGRY |

| | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <p>to me in a gentle way, it seemed to me like strategies. There are time other guys are being nice to me, but deep inside I think they are the same as the first one. I'm rejecting everyone because of what happen in my pass</p> | Victim had rejected of men | REJECT OF MEN |
| <p>Q: What are the community responses when violence occurs? A: I am the one responsible for everything. Even my mother was implicated in this story. There is something clever in this story. Every time he did something wrong he went to my mother first and talk about it. Now, my mother thought that he is a good man, and I am the one who is bad. One day, my mom said violently to me: "What kind of life do you want? You want the street's life or you want some stability? She got even angrier.</p> | Society made woman responsible for the abuse | VICTIM WAS BLAMED BY SOCIETY & MOM |
| <p>Q: Does societal norm cause domestic violence? A: The society makes things go this way and that Depends on how the person was raised. We Have a Haitian proverb that said "The teeth bite The tongue all the times," which means all relationships have problems and do not run because of that.</p> | Society is the cause of abuse | SOCIETY FAULT |
| <p>Q: What makes your partner act like that? A: It is how he was raised</p> | Man commits abuses because of his education | EDUCATION, CAUSE OF ABUSE |
| <p>Q: What makes your partner act like that? A: It is how he was raised</p> | Man acted like that because of his education | PARTNER RAISED TO BECOME ABUSER |
| <p>Q: Did you report the abuse? Why or Why not? A: No. I was already blamed by my family for the abuse.</p> | Woman did not report abuse because of blame | NO REPORT. BLAME ON WOMAN |
| <p>Q: What legal and social services exist to address the problems? A: Ministere de la Condition Feminine</p> | Ministere de la Condition Feminine | MINISTERE DE LA CONDITION FEMININE |
| <p>Q: Do you think men can also experience domestic violence? A: Yes, but there are more women abused than men</p> | Yes, but not as women do | YES, LESS PERCENTAGE |
| <p>Q: What kind of measures will be the most Effective for preventing violence? A: Every man that has plan to have a family needs</p> | Men need training | TRAINING FOR MEN |
| <p>to go to a seminar where they will teach them on how to treat women. Teach them about women' feelings and respect that are a condition for a succeed relationship. A psychologist can help them with that.</p> | Men need psychological assistance | PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE FOR MEN |

From the previous process, I obtained several themes selected as the most relevant since they shared the same characteristics. These themes reported in table 2 include: battering, slapping, slandering, neglect, abandon, rape, bad words, choking, threats, destruction of objects, no respect, humiliation, controlling, jealousy, men having mistress, women organizations, fear of stigma, blame, and men dominance.

For each of the two research questions, I coded the interview data based on emergent themes and ideas. The themes produced an inclusive perception of the participants' responses to the interview questions. RQ1: This question asked: What is the meaning of domestic violence to the Haitian women in the department of Artibonite? Eleven out of seventeen abused women interviewed defined domestic violence as either the fact of being beaten, slapped, kicked, pushed, yelled and manhandled, manipulated, choked, either being neglected, threatened, and humiliated by a male partner that supposed to be a protector. Three of them defined domestic violence as any kind of abuse operated within the family; when men make women and children suffer. They also added the fact that using bad words to hurt women is a popular way for men to abuse women. The remaining three participants came with the definition that domestic violence is when a man violates a woman's trust, makes a woman waste her energy, or go against her rights. In sum, not one of the women interviewed included sexual violence as a definition of domestic violence. Domestic violence can be physical, verbal, and economical within a relationship.

However, for the question related to the kinds of acts that they consider violent, five abused women included rape as an act of domestic violence. Two of them reported

being raped by their partners. They also completed the first list by adding that being considered a housewife almost meant being a slave. Some women considered the fact to be forbidden to go out and to talk about the abuse to others as acts of domestic violence. Making false statements about her partner was also recognized as an act of violence between partners.

RQ2- The second question was: What factors inhibit or support a woman reporting domestic violence to the proper authorities? The presence of the women's organization in the Artibonite's department is a potential factor that encourages abused women to report domestic violence. However, some women stated that women organizations are inefficient in the procedures related to a criminal pursuit. Some of them do not have a legal service available to defend these women who do not have the economic capability to hire a lawyer. Others can only encourage the abused women to speak up but without faith that they will win the cases. Factors that inhibit women from reporting domestic violence seem to have the upper hand. The participants advanced that they are scared to report the abuses because the Haitian society blames all the women (from any social level) who bring legal action against their partner. They are seen as bad women. Besides, telling others about violence by a partner remains a family affair that does not deserve to be known by the public. For many, if they let the public know about the abuse, they will be the ones to be blamed. It was said that the man is the head of the family who can decide when and how to correct his wife. In fact, the majority of participants in this study agreed that Haitian men are educated to become abusers; no

need for them to get blamed by others (authorities and other services) after being abused and humiliated.

Fifteen of the 17 abused women who were interviewed felt a range of emotions and showed some regrets about their experiences with an abuser. The majority of the participants were abused during their entire relationship and had no contact with a service provider for immediate assistance. Most of the abused women depended economically on their male partners. However, many of them were working and contributing to the survival of the family. Two victims were the ones responsible for the entire family, including the husband. The women's level of education does not appear to be a protection for women in Artibonite. Most of the participants got their college degree (university in Haiti).

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Through internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, trustworthiness was established in this study (Patton, 2002). The concepts of trustworthiness in qualitative research, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were established with an objective that helped nullify the researcher's bias (Elman, Gerring, & Mahoney, 2016). Also, using two data collection, hand-coding and NVivo, confirm the validity of the data. More about the concepts of trustworthiness and their application to the study will be described next.

Credibility

Credibility is an essential internal validity concept (Elman et al., 2016; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility ensures that accurate descriptions of the participants'

experiences are undertaking. It is the most important aspect of determining data's trustworthiness and interpretation (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). From the interview with each participant, I captured some accurate narrations of their experiences. I found themes describing survivors' experiences of domestic violence, and I did not need a second interview with the participants since saturation was achieved when no new themes were revealed from the analysis of the victims' data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). After interviewing the 17 participants, I reached a redundancy point that generated the end of collecting data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I was the only one collecting the participants' data. I reviewed the participants' responses and asked for clarity if there was a need for further information.

Transferability

A substantial description of the findings that was achieved in this study can be potentially applied to future research (Elman et al., 2016). According to Creswell (2007), the transferability of qualitative research intents on discovering a sufficient description of a specific phenomenon. Descriptions such as the participants' stories, the study setting, the procedures used, the detailed demographic situational reports, the data analysis, and the interpretation can help researchers in their conclusions relative to the dependability of the data. They will be able to decide on the transfer of the results to other contexts of interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability

The data analysis of the study that was consistent with the research findings confirms the research's dependability. Because dependability reflects the reliability,

trustworthiness, and consistency of qualitative studies, I recorded each participant interview and thematic summaries and saved them in a password-protected file on my computer. A reflective journal was also created for my decisions and thoughts apropos the study process, can reduce bias, and increase the study's dependability (Guba, 1981). The open-ended questions used in this qualitative study allowed me to create significance through my communication with participants and support the dependability of my data collection and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability increases the confidence in the evidence and serves as an audit to any researcher that would like to follow the research process (Adams et al., 2014; Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012).

Confirmability

Confirmability is an unbiased measure that demonstrates trustworthiness, connection, and adaptability in a study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In a reflective journal, I noted everything that can provide confirmability during the collection process. I listened attentively to the participants' stories, recorded them, and avoided using my knowledge and past experiences on the subject when keeping all collected data original. The data obtained in creole were carefully compared to the translation before the coding process. This precaution helped me establish confirmability of the study through audits of data results, translation, and interpretations.

Summary

The organization of the interview information: demographics, personal data, emerging and discussion of themes facilitate the presentation of the exact declaration passages from the interviews that reflected the experiences of the women victims of

domestic violence in Artibonite, Haiti. I presented the themes developed from the data and answered the two research questions simultaneously. From the interviews of seventeen women living in a heterosexual relationship, experiencing abuse from their partners, themes from the data analysis include men power, patriarchy, abandon and neglect, having a mistress, cannot speak out, shame, humiliation, and stigma were the leading factors. These factors created by societal norms, public attitudes, and beliefs suggested a higher consideration of the partnership violence occurrence that constitutes a barrier to victims to denounce the violence even though it is an essential health and social problem in the department of Artibonite, Haiti. Thus, I obtained a more vital understanding of domestic violence against women in Artibonite, and readers may better apprehend the phenomenon of partnership violence in this emerging country. Chapter 5 will present a discussion of the study's findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

In an intimate relationship, violence is an issue that has multiple adverse effects on the victims. These effects could be associated with development issues and health concerns such as depression, anxiety, low-esteem, future violent behaviors, suicide, injuries, trauma, and fear to speak out (CDC, 2020). According to Rose (2015), partnership violence is a crime against all of humanity and constitutes a public and social issue. Partnership violence is a complicated phenomenon around the world because it is not easy to understand nor to remedy. The complicated nature of domestic violence is the cause of attention from activists and researchers.

It was consequential to explore, by using a phenomenological design, the experiences, views, and beliefs of the Haitian women on the subject matter because Haiti lacks research and information on the subject of domestic violence. Further, the factors that influence domestic violence and the community-level norms and attitudes that encourage violence against women, the discrimination and stigma, and the principal causes of the victims' resistance to reporting the abuses were identified in the objective to fill the gap of research on the characteristics and the magnitude of the violence within the context of a family in Artibonite, Haiti, where women are the primary victims. Two main research questions were analyzed:

RQ1: What is the meaning of domestic violence to the Haitian women in the department of Artibonite?

RQ2: What factors inhibit or support a woman reporting domestic violence to the proper authorities?

Seventeen adult women living in heterosexual relationships, from 13 different cities of the department of Artibonite (Gonaives, Saint-Marc, Estère, Gros-Morne, Saint-Michel, Ennery, Marmelade, Terre-Neuve, Anse-Rouge, Liancourt, Dessalines, Verrettes, Desdunes, Petite Riviere, Montrouis), from all religions, socioeconomic status, and educational levels, constituted the study sample. The sociodemographic characteristic of each participant was taken into account. This included the age of the respondents, number of children, level of education, marital status, religion, and income. Qualitative interviews were used to cover the lack of information on the problem and present a comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence violence against women in this area (McLeod, 2017). The data collection was processed through a semistructured phone interview. The interviews were recorded, translated from Creole to English, and analyzed under the thematic analysis traditions. Various themes generated from each question were assigned to the data transcripts.

Chapter 5 will discuss the new research findings and insights that will underline the significance of the study. It will be concluded by the application to theory, the stakeholder implications, and the study's limitations and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of Findings

It was initially challenging to find women interested in voicing their views and opinions on the domestic violence subject. The main reason was the confinement dictated by COVID-19. The women's organizations could not have their regular meetings. Consequently, women who had experience abuse could not be made aware of

the study. Aided by the staff of FEFBA (Federation des Femmes du Bas Artibonite), OFSA (Organisation des Femmes Solidaires de l'Artibonite), and COFA (Collectif Femmes de l'Artibonite) who provided me a list of women who had experienced domestic violence at a certain time of their lives, I was able to directly contact some women who were interested in participating. One of the participants even testified that she felt relieved to talk about her past experiences. Many main themes emerged from the study. Some themes are similar to the few pieces of research conducted on domestic abuse in Haiti. A lot of new insights were also made.

From the literature discussed in Chapter 2, it was revealed that violence could have multiple definitions. Beating, slapping, pushing, shoving, kicking, choking, and threatening with a weapon were the common themes shared by the participants about their viewpoints on violence against women. These findings show that physical violence is a core form of abuse. It was also revealed that themes such as men in power, patriarchy, abandon and neglect, having a mistress, inability to speak out, shame, humiliation, and stigma are some definitions of partnership violence that can bring various psychological effects on women and children. Furthermore, findings from this research identified unemployed women as the most vulnerable category of women. Unemployment could entail some physical and financial violence within the family. On the other hand, employment for women was not identified as a protective factor against violence for women in Artibonite.

At last, the theme rape (revealed only by a few participants) can be ranged in the sexual abuse category. Some of the participants were not at their ease when identifying

“forced to have sexual intercourse” as rape. In the community’s views, a husband cannot be prosecuted for rape if the victim is his wife, concubine, or girlfriend. The Haitian laws do not recognize spousal rape as a crime, although rape is recently prohibited and sanctioned at a minimum of 10 years of forced labor (State.gov., 2019). Before 2005, rape was only considered a crime against morals regarding the victim’s honor, not the physical, psychological and sexual harm (Dukes, 1984).

The study showed that violence could be transmitted from one generation to the next because of the “cycle of violence” applied by observing aggression (Bandura & Ribes-Inesta, 1976; Cuevas & Bui, 2016; Black et al., 2010). The theme “Society faults/structures” show his pertinence from the experiences of the children who are trained to become aggressors (Barnett et al., 2005). Exposure to violence in a family affects an individual on how to learn and apply violence (Doumas, Margolin, & John, 1994; Cochran et al., 2011; Franklin & Kercher, 2012). Child’s application of violence does not necessitate that the child endures some physical abuse personally. Being an observer of violence is a possible way for the child to portray aggressive acts and be a participant (Straus, Gelles, & Steinmetz, 1980; World Bank 2012: 152). According to Cochran et al. (2011) and Franklin and Kercher (2012), exposure to violence from an early age condition can be seen as normal behavior. This study supported the social learning theory proposed by the psychologist Albert Bandura (1977) and by other researchers, including Davis (2010) and Yount et al. (2016). Behaviors learned will be repeated in later life.

The theme “Men Power” is another reason explaining domestic violence against women in Artibonite, Haiti. Men always have the desire to feel respected and influential, to feel in charge and control. To manifest their dominance over women within the family, Haitian men use violence towards their partners (Campbell, 1993; Johnson, 1995; Dobash & Dobash, 1979) with the collaboration of Haitian society's patriarchal ideology. Men use “power and control” to preserve their position over women (Dodash & Dodash, 1979). The tendency is that Haitian men have to work to stay macho, an attitude demonstrating that they are “real men”. By perpetrating violence towards women, Haitian men keep alive the cultural expectations. They should be aggressively in charge and be able to control their partners. This model that also derived from the feminist theory, presents power imbalance as the primary cause of partnership violence.

Patriarchy is one of the main themes that emerged from the different interviews. It engenders dominance over women, results from the colonization described under the rubric “Historical Interpretations of Intimate Violence”. The slave condition of the Haitian community has an important impact on the lifelong patriarchal system of domination that still exists in Artibonite, Haiti. Women were considered the “bottom of the economic and social ladder” stated Pierce & Elisme (2000). Patriarchy is an invisible system that offers an unequal consideration for men over women (IACHR, 2009). Haitian women detain less power and are willing to be child-bearer and home-keeper (Crabtree, 2019). Patriarchy helps in conserving and adopting abuses against women (Yllo & Strauss, 1990). Women in Artibonite believe that they are under the authority and the dominance of men. The refrain “men are the head of the family” seems to be

well established in their unconscious mind and constitutes the rationale for violence over women in Artibonite, Haiti. I was shocked by the clear articulation of the participants' acceptance of this situation, which also constitutes the main reason for the participants' choice not to report the violence experienced. This stereotype gender lets me understand that Haitian men use violence to communicate with their partners most of the time. Violence is their language to show their emotions, feelings, and frustrations the same way Haitian parents use to correct their children or children placed under their control, called the *restavèk* phenomenon. *Restavèk* comes from French term "rester avec" which means "leave with" in English. It is when a child is placed at a friend's house or someone known by the family because of economic difficulties of the parents. This child becomes a domestic servant and could be submitted to a form of exploitation. It is culturally appropriate to use physical force to communicate to children the Haitian parents' dissatisfaction with an attitude as did the slave masters under slavery to preclude disobedience. As per Reddock (1994), in a slave society, beatings and punishments were the common languages that facilitate imprints of abuse on the bodies and psyches of slaves. Such violence was instituted as a norm and created a culture of violence (Brereton, 2010).

This patriarchal system also created some privileges for boys and some disadvantages for girls by a stereotypical procedure. Girls are the ones in charge of doing laundry (with their hands), cooking, cleaning. In some rural areas, girls cannot have the high school diplomas since it is an opportunity reserved for boys. The parents can choose between helping their sons pursue their classic study and keeping with them

the girls or by offering the girls the possibility to have a professional career. In Artibonite, this type of socialization towards boys created adult men's choice to consider their female partners as homemakers/slaves; a theme emerged from this study, explaining how women are treated in a relationship.

Abandon and neglect are two new themes not described in the literature but indicated by the study participants. The “fatherless homes” are standard practices realized by some Haitian men when they do not want to stay in a relationship. Fatherless homes are a family trend that happens, most of the time, in the free-union, pretexting that children born from a concubine or a mistress can be abandoned and do not have the same rights as children born from spouses. This situation was encouraged by a norm in the Haitian culture that classified children under the rubrics: “enfant légitime” (born from a spouse), “enfant naturel” (born from a concubine), and “enfant adultérin” (born from a mistress). It seems familiar to Haitian men to abandon their “enfant naturel” and “enfant adultérin” if there are not with their mother anymore. Reddock (1994) recognized that men in the Caribbean are reprieved from their responsibility to be present and regardful fathers in the home because of patriarchal traditions. It is important to note that new legislation relative to the paternity recently modified articles 606 and 611 of the Haitian civil code that permitted such distinction.

Marital infidelity can be a psychological abuse causing “mental and emotional anguish”. The theme “having a mistress” was pointed out by many participants who believed that this infidelity constituted their abuse’s leading cause. Men’s suspicions of partner infidelity were associated with abuse strongly tied to normative gender roles.

Boonzaier (2005) recognized that men having an affair could be more prone to violence because of their sexual conquests and the male-dominance. They also use violence to react to the accusations of infidelity (Lary, Maman, Katebalila & Mbwambo, 2004). On the other hand, women who have perceive their partner's infidelity may react violently by jealousy and anger (Karamagi et al., 2006). Thus, when women believe that their partners have an extramarital sexual partner, they are at a higher risk of experimenting with physical or economic violence.

Study findings also demonstrated that "women cannot speak out", a theme emerged from the respondents' narratives. It is consistent in the literature that domestic violence is perceived in Artibonite, Haiti, as a personal issue between partners (Lazarus-Black, 2007). Regardless of the women organization's efforts trying to publicize and criminalize violence within the family, Haitian women still believe that they should deal with the partnership violence on their own. Some victims believe that reporting violence is a waste of time and a situation offered to the public to blame them. Any punishment will be applied to the perpetrators of domestic violence against women, either because of the noninterest of the persons working on the juridic system or because of the perpetrator's social and political status, as demonstrated in the literature. Thus, no need to report violence for neither the police nor the authorities in the justice system. The Haitian judicial system is corrupted and leads to its failure in addressing the domestic violence phenomenon (HRW, 1994).

Shame and humiliation, including stigma, may force women to experience marital abuse to hide from the public's opinions and not report the abuse. James (2004)

illustrated this situation as “feelings of depersonalization”. Abused women create their room, separated from others by the manifestation of trauma, and do not speak out. This isolation, which can lead to some mental health consequences, may give the victim the sensation of being rejected by the community. The fear of social judgment associated with the reprisal is the main reason for of Haitian women’s reluctance to report domestic violence. In the Haitian culture, the community always scrutinizes the victim to find the reason for the violence. The victim is the one that provokes the attack either because she did something wrong, either because she is weak or “natural-born victim” (Berns, 2004). Even without a good reason, the community is still trying to come up with some explanations by assigning the blame to women (Berns, 2004). Consequently, unreported violence encourages the cycle of violence and therefore strengthens the perpetuation of violence within the family.

In this study, revealed perspectives on men showed the importance of the social learning theory of Albert Bandura on the environment and the influence on what they learn. Despite the various laws and the installation of public authorities, Haitian people do not tolerate being reporting to authorities. A report of an infraction could automatically end the relationship between two individuals of two families. Some people even stated that if someone denounces a family or neighbor to authorities, he becomes a potential enemy.

It was established that many participants when explaining their experiences, shared the themes documented by the feminist beliefs when focusing on the impact of culture over violence against women. From their views, a patriarchal structure

encourages physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence in heterosexual relations as control methods and maintains the gender power disparity (Yllo & Bograd, 1988). Women are always the potential victims in traditional societies, which impose them obeisance and respectfulness even though they are not fully respected.

Elements such as age, number of children, education level, marital status, and employment/income were considered in this study in analyzing the risk factors for violence against women in Artibonite, Haiti. Results are followed:

Age

In addition to the themes unfolded from this study, the age did not influence domestic violence among women in Artibonite. Age does not eliminate the possibility of being abused by a partner. However, I discovered that most young women participated in the study. A substantial number of young women may get married or engaged in a relationship for financial support. In Haiti, girls or women are considered “born prepared” to be taken in charge by men. This situation could make young women more vulnerable to violence. Some believe that manifold women started facing gender-based violence at a young age; they believe that it is normal that way. Because exposed to violence in their early lives, they are more likely to accept violence from their partners.

Number of Children

The number of children within the family was not found as a risk factor for women’s violence. From 1 to 4 children, the situation was the same. However, many children in the household may increase the frustration and the brutality of the perpetrator when combined with the women’s unemployment. The research found that economic

distress can predict marital dissatisfaction and family conflicts (MacMillan and Gartner, 1999). Most of the time, the abuser chose to abandon and/or neglect the children. On the other hand, having many children can force women to tolerate the abuse in their interests. Because of financial support, it is difficult for abused women to leave the abuser.

Education Level

Contrarily to my first impression, a high level of education does not automatically protect women from violence. More educated or less educated women are all subjected to violence. Less-educated women can have a particular difficulty to handle situations of violence. At the same time, their partners may threaten highly educated women because of the crisis of masculinity. Hindi, Kishor, and Ansara (2008) showed in their study on domestic violence that more educated women were at greater risk than the less educated ones. To prove their power, men could use violence to confirm their masculinity identity and consequently their superiority over women (Gage & Hutchinson, 2006:21). In sum, education is a perplexing factor that could contribute to risk and protection at the same time. Alone, education is not a potential factor to stop violence against women.

Marital Status

Married or being a concubine was not associated with an increased risk of violence. However, this study demonstrated that women whose partners have affairs with their mistress were more likely to being maltreated. The possibility of violence against women increases by the polygamy since men face more stress and need a better economic situation to handle multiple families better. The masochism tied to the paternalism structure envenom the position of women in Artibonite. Smith Fawzi et al. (2005)

acknowledged that women with polygamous partners were more vulnerable to sexual abuse than the other category.

Religion

The religion of the victims was another element considered in analyzing the risk factors for violence in Artibonite. Catholic, Christian, Mormon, and adepts of Vodou are all at risk of facing violence within their family. In religious traditions, the victims regard their faith as pacifistic. They are influenced by the fundamental beliefs and ideological frameworks that confirm male dominance over women. These adherents believe that God gives to men authorities over women, a lesson learned from the leaders' teachings, traditions, and doctrine: "Wives, be subjected to your husbands as you are to the Lord". By this instruction, Haitian women have learned to stay in abusive relationships. They accept the traditional teaching on women's inferiority. By using God's name, religious leaders can impose their positions on a subject without the fear of discussion. Furthermore, religious leaders do not consider violence against women seriously. Since men are the head of the family, they detain full authority to correct their wives. Regardless of a woman's particular religious affiliation, she has to deal with some aspects of religious beliefs that will serve as a roadblock to fight the abuses against women in Artibonite, Haiti (Fortune, 1987). Consequently, the results indicate a significant relationship between religion and intimate partner violence from the participants' demographic characteristics.

Employment/Income

In addition to the women's age and education, unemployment is an equivocal factor for violence against women. The participants in the study who were victims of violence were included in all categories: working, non-working, employed, self-employed. It is important to note that one victim was the one who supported the family financially. In his 2005-2006 EMMUS, the Ministère de la Santé Publique (MSPP) affirmed 28.4% of not-working women, 25.2% of employed for money, and 25.0% of employed not for money encountered the same levels of violence (MSPP, 2007). Parallely to the education factor, employment could offer to the abused woman resources to protect herself from violence but not necessarily decrease a woman's risk of partnership violence.

Limitations of the Study

As for all research, this study has limitations that can affect its outcomes. First, an important number of Haitian women who are attached to traditional beliefs may support violence as a way to correct women. This situation confirms their position to not talk about abuse to strangers. Some women in rural areas are still in fear of talking about their abuses. Others think that the study had alternative motives; the researcher could try to make money by interviewing them. They do not trust outsiders.

Another deterrent to the study was the sensibility of the topic being explored. Despite some abused women's willingness to share their experiences, they likely feel some discomfort to report their abuse. Many of those contacted for the interviews declined at the last moment without explaining their decisions.

However, there is a considerable strength that is worth mentioning. Fifteen “communes” (viewed as cities) over seventeen that composed the department of Artibonite (county) were represented in this study. Gonaives and Saint-Marc got, each, two representations because more emancipated women reside in the main cities and are ready to make their voice counted. Different education levels, religions, and socioeconomic groupings were also incorporated in the study and contributed to various data collected.

Recommendations

This study attempted to fill the literature gap concerning domestic violence in the department of Artibonite, Haiti. Despite its consideration, much more research can be conducted on the matter. Domestic violence is firmly established in the Haitian culture. Other researchers have studied the sexual abuse and the outcomes in the Haitian communities, especially in the capital and the big cities, but any study on domestic violence was conducted in Artibonite. This study did start to fill the literature gap relative to domestic violence in remote areas and encourage further research.

There are four significant recommendations for future research. First, training actors of the justice system to increase confidence and competence is recommended (Rose et al., 2011). The police and justice officers have to be educated about the meaning of domestic violence, to be aware of the legislation protecting women and their responsibility from combating society’s negative perception of violence against women.

Second, the government officials need to manage and address the geographic distance problem in Artibonite to prevent violence dilemma in the remote areas that

seemed to be abandoned. Some communal sections are not assisted with any police officers, any emergency shelters for victims, nor any programs at all.

Third, research is needed on how the public attitudes and beliefs endure domestic violence and what causes the subject to believe that a partner's abuse is acceptable. This study focused primarily on the victims' thoughts and did not analyze the community's perceptions, which could explain their tolerance.

Fourth, because the current study consisted of abused women by men in a heterosexual partnership, additional research is needed for a complete and accurate understanding of the phenomenon of domestic violence in Haiti against both men and women since it was confirmed that men could also be victims in a heterosexual relationship. By doing so, more contributing factors of domestic violence within the Haitian families will be discovered.

Implications

Domestic violence is a considerable problem in Artibonite Haiti. Few women organizations address partnership violence in this area and provide some domestic violence programs. However, the effectiveness of these programs was impeded by the culture/norms and the legislature. The majority of the respondents feel that the Haitian society does not value them despite their contribution to the country's development and their family's survival. All stakeholders should consider the cultural beliefs that support domestic violence and work not only on the laws and policies but also on the authorities' involvement to fight the phenomenon, particularly the police officers and the "Juges de Paix". "Juges de Paix" are judges working on the lower-level body of the Haitian justice

system. Law without appropriate actions is insignificant. That is why it is essential to maintain department training on domestic violence topics for those working on the justice system, notably the police officer. Furthermore, the current domestic violence programs are more reactive than proactive. This situation explains the importance of the enforcement of the existing laws criminalizing abuse on women and children.

Also, participants in this study recognized that the masculine image and roles encourage domestic violence. Male power and dominance are rooted in the Haitian historical heritage. Men are educated to be aggressive toward their partners. There is a need to destroy the socialization habits by reeducating the community and teaching conflict resolution skills to everyone, notably students from their primary school levels. Incorporate new materials on gender socialization and equal treatment for girls and boys, women and men in all aspects of life. We will, then, assist in a change in the social attitudes and norms supporting violence against women, and every citizen will understand that applying sexism in the community is not beneficial for the country's development.

Conclusions

The present study attempted to fill the gap in understanding the characteristics and the magnitude of the violence against women in the department of Artibonite and the rationale of the unreported cases of domestic violence. The results discussed above confirmed existing partnership violence. The data collected revealed that laws and policies are not effective in deterring criminal behavior against women. The matter is more complicated than editing laws. Cultural beliefs and norms shape domestic violence,

and it is transmitted from one generation to one other. Abused women are trying to preserve cultural values by remaining quiet or keeping their abuse a secret (Kasturirangan et al., 2004). Men are trying to keep alive their power over women (Dodash & Dodash, 1979). To remedy this situation, I firmly believe that both parties, men and women, must be involved in the discussions and decisions to eradicate domestic violence in Artibonite in particular, and Haiti in general. The women organizations and the government must consider men as an essential resource to fight violence against women. Study findings determine the relevance of the Social Learning Theory and the Feminist Theory in understanding the behavior of Haitian men living in an abusive environment who learn through modeling, and the socialization and development of Haitian women who are educated to accept mal aggression and sexism. Despite its limitations, this study's results could facilitate the Haitian government's interventions, leaders, and women's organizations working in Haiti and their approaches in removing negative perspectives about gender in society's life.

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Appendix A: Demographic Questionnaire

Perceptions of Violence Among Women in the Department of Artibonite, Haiti

Walden University

Code assigned to the interviewee _____ Date _____

Where do you live? _____

What is your current age? _____

What is your status?

a) Married _____ b) Plaçage (Free-Union) _____

Religion

a) Catholic _____ b) Christian _____
c) Baptist _____ d) Vodou _____ e) Other _____

How many kids do you have? _____

Educational Level: a) No schooling _____ b) Elementary _____
b) High school _____ c) College/higher _____

Employment (Participant): Yes or no _____

If yes:

___ Merchant _____ Teacher _____ Housekeeper _____
___ Seamstress _____ Nurse _____ Secretary _____ Other _____

If no, who has an income within the family? _____

Appendix B: Kestyon Sou ou Menm

Koman fanm nan latibonit, Haiti yo konpran vyolans kap fèt sou fanm yo

Walden University

Kòd mwen bay moun map poze kesyon an _____ Dat _____

Ki kote ou rete? _____

Ki laj ou genyen konyè a? _____

Ki stati sosyal ou?

a) Marye _____ b) Plasse _____

Ki relijyon w

a) Katolik _____ b) Kreyen _____
c) Batis _____ d) Vodou _____ e) Lòt _____

Konbyen pitit ou genyen? _____

Edikasyon nivo w: a) pat janm al lekòl _____ b) Lekol primè _____
c) Lekòl segondè _____ c) Inivèsite _____

Travay (Patisipan an): Wi oubyen non _____

Si se wi:

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| ___ Machann | ___ Madmoizèl lekòl | ___ Moun kap travay kay moun |
| ___ Koutiryè | ___ Miss | ___ Sekretè ___ Lòt |

Si se non, kiyès ki pote kob nan kay la? _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Code assigned to the interviewee _____

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences, views, beliefs, and motivations of individuals and the factors that influence domestic violence against women in the department of Artibonite, Haiti.

Warm up question:

Why do you agree to share with me, today, your experiences of domestic violence within your family?

Questions

1. In your opinion, what is domestic violence?
2. What kind of acts do you consider violent?
3. What problems have you experienced within your family?
4. Has the violence happened one time or at many times?
5. Who are the perpetrators?
6. What problems are you facing after an abuse? Could you explain that?
7. How did it make you feel?
8. What are the community responses when violence occurs?
9. Does societal norm cause domestic violence?
10. Did you report the abuse? Why or Why not?

11. What legal and social services exist to address this problem?
12. Do you think men can also experience domestic violence?
13. What kind of measures will be the most effective for preventing violence?

Appendix D: Kestyon Entevyu

Kòd mwen bay moun map poze kesyon an _____

Le Entevyou a: _____

Dat: _____

Nom moun kap reponn kesyon yo: _____

Nimero Entevyou a: _____

Etid sa a ap fèt pou ede moun konpran pouki tout moun nan sosyete a dako pou yap bat fanm, la perez ak tout bagay ki fè moun yo fini bat yo pè di sa epi mande pou yo respekte dwa yo.

Kestyons pou mete nou alèz:

Pou kisa ou dako pale avè m sou koze vyolans ki te fèt nan fanmi w?

Kestyon yo

1. Deprè ou menm kisa domestik vyolans ye?
2. Ki bagay lè yon moun fè ki se vyolans pou ou?
3. Ki pwoblem ou te viv lakay ou?
4. Konbyen fwa te genyen vyolans sou ou: yon fwa oubyen plizyè fwa?
5. Ki moun ki kon ap bat ou/ki kon fè vyolans sa a?
6. Aprè yo fini bat ou ki lot pwoblem ou kon genyen? Eske ou ka eksplike nou?
7. Aprè sa, koman ou santi w?
8. Ki sa moun nan zòn lan fè aprè yo wè jan mari w/patnè w maltrete w?
9. Eske se jan sosyete a konpran li an ki fè genyen vyolans sou fanm?
10. Eske ou te al fè rapo abi sa yo? Poukisa? Oubyen poukisa ou pat fè sa?

- 11- Ki sèvis legal ak ki moun nan sosyete a ki la pou ede ak problem sa a?
12. Eske ou panse ke fanm kont bat gason tou?
13. Ki sa ou panse nou dwe fè kap bon pou gason pa bat fanm anko?